

# Total Housekeeping

## - Office Housekeeping -

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Housekeeping at the office is important to promote a safe and healthy workplace. Injuries resulting from unsafe conditions in the office are particularly preventable because external factors (e.g., weather) are minimal. Despite this, injuries resulting from housekeeping deficiencies in the office are far too commonplace.

### **What types of safety hazards are created by poor housekeeping?**

Office safety incidents caused by poor housekeeping generally consist of slips, trips, and falls; collisions; or falling objects. It is important that we all take the time to notice and eliminate conditions that may pose a safety hazard in the office. Access to wet floors should be restricted until the surface dries. Electrical and telephone cords cannot be allowed to cross our walking paths. Slippery steps should be made less slippery by adding non-slip surfaces wherever possible.

Whenever hazards are recognized we all have an obligation to take action to prevent an incident *before it occurs*. Cleaning up a spill on the floor (even if you didn't make it), rerouting an electrical cord left in a walkway, or moving a box left in a walkway are all examples of actions that might be taken to prevent future incidents.

### **How does housekeeping affect my health?**

Most offices have a kitchen area. The cleanliness of food preparation areas is directly related to the safety of the prepared foods, and this cleanliness is based on the care the area is given by the users.

Food stored in desks, cabinets, and other office areas has the potential to attract unwanted pests. Food items should be secured in sealed, plastic containers. Food wastes should not be left in trash cans over weekends or holidays.

### **Tips**

- File cabinets should not open into walkways and the heaviest loads should be placed in bottom drawers.
- Emergency exits should never be blocked, even temporarily.
- Heavy objects should not be stored on top of cabinets.
- Recycling containers should be used to reduce waste in accordance with local regulations.
- Keep food preparation areas clean and sanitary. Items left in refrigerators should be cleaned out periodically.

**Remember:** our office is our “second home” for many hours each week and we all have a role to play in creating a safe and healthful environment.

### **Resources**

<http://daq.state.nc.us/employee/safety/cleanoffice.pdf>

[http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show\\_document?p\\_table=STANDARDS&p\\_id=9714](http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=9714)

