

Housekeeping

Version: 1.4

Date: 30th October 2024

To help reduce the potential for fires, a culture of good housekeeping is crucial as part of your overall loss prevention and risk management strategy.



Introduction

Good housekeeping standards are essential to loss prevention and should apply throughout the whole of a site. This does not simply mean cleanliness – it also includes ensuring that a workplace is tidy and well organised. For the purposes of this document, housekeeping is generally regarded as the:

- Standard to which buildings and equipment are maintained
- Arrangements for storage and disposal of waste
- Appropriateness of the operational layout
- Continuity of combustible materials



The Importance of Good Housekeeping

It is a generally held view that fire losses in properties with a good level of housekeeping usually cause less damage than those whose housekeeping is poor. Examples of poor housekeeping include:

- Wall panel damage
- Accumulation of waste
- Untidiness, and items not in the correct location
- Aisles not wide enough for traffic movements
- Storage within aisles or line side
- Inadequate lighting
- Overgrown vegetation and poorly maintained grounds
- Pooling water on a roof

Eliminating hazards within the workplace will improve operational efficiency and provide a safer environment for employees to work. Furthermore, clean, well-organised premises demonstrate that high levels of housekeeping are a key consideration for the organisation.

Housekeeping Standards

Implementing standards

Documented standards should be introduced specifying individual responsibilities with regards to housekeeping arrangements. These standards should detail matters such as the type and frequency of cleaning regimes in all areas, including the workplace, machinery, plant rooms, hazardous locations, storage locations, roofs and gutters.

Cleaning should be frequent enough to prevent the build-up of any waste, dust and grease that could introduce additional fire hazards and increase the fire load or its continuity. Procedures must also be in place for all building maintenance work required, including seasonal exposures such as leaf accumulation on roofs in autumn or foliage growth in summer.

A housekeeping inspection checklist should be introduced. A programme of inspections and audits should be carried out by trained individuals to monitor compliance and ensure that standards are maintained and improved upon. The frequency of inspections will vary between organisations, but reviews may be required during or after changes to the site.

Employee responsibilities

Individuals should be provided with the equipment, materials and training required for their designated tasks. All employees must be encouraged to maintain good levels of housekeeping standards and report any concerns, understanding that poor housekeeping will not be tolerated.

Improving standards

It is essential that a commitment to continually improve housekeeping standards is demonstrated throughout the entire organisation, both at management as well as operational level. A lack of management support can create an environment where housekeeping is not deemed to be important.

Checklist

A generic Housekeeping – Fire Prevention Checklist is presented in Appendix 1 which can be tailored to your own organisation.

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Additional Information

Relevant Loss Prevention Standards include:

- Control and Management of Combustible Waste Materials
- Fire Safety Inspections
- Maintenance Regimes
- Smoking and the Workplace
- Lighting

To find out more, please visit [Aviva Risk Management Solutions](#) or speak to one of our advisors.

Email us at riskadvice@aviva.com or call 0345 366 6666.*

*Calls may be recorded and/or monitored for our joint protection.

Appendix 1: Housekeeping – Fire Prevention Checklist



Location	
Date	
Completed by (name and signature)	

	Housekeeping – Fire Prevention	Y/N	Comments
1.	<p>Is there any sign of damage, or wear and tear to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The building exterior? • Exterior walls (and are these protected against vehicle and storage impact)? • External doors? • Windows and door frames? 		
2.	<p>Are the roofs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a good state of repair? • Without any signs of damage or leakage? • Clear of debris, foliage and waste? • Free from pooling or ponding? 		
3.	<p>Is the guttering clear of vegetation?</p> <p>Are the roof drains clear of debris?</p>		
4.	<p>Inside the building, are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All building elements and structural members clean and free from dust and residue build-up? • There any signs of damage or wear and tear to the building interior? • The interior walls protected against vehicle and storage impact? • Internal doors and closure mechanisms maintained and in a good state of repair? • All fire doors operable and not wedged open? 		

	Housekeeping – Fire Prevention Contd.	Y/N	Comments
5.	<p>In the external areas, is/are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste and yard storage maintained at least 10m from buildings? • Vegetation appropriately maintained and cut back? • Any yard services and equipment maintained away from waste, designated smoking areas and vegetation, and protected from impact? • Site boundaries appropriately maintained and consistent with site security philosophies? 		
6.	<p>If smoking is permitted on site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are designated smoking areas appropriately managed and maintained? • Are adequate controls in place, including signage and designated or restricted external areas? • Is smoking waste and ordinary combustible waste segregated? 		
7.	<p>Are the following rooms maintained clean, tidy, sterile and free from combustible storage and/or materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant rooms? • Utility or support rooms? • Communications and server/IT rooms? <p>Are there any noises or smells that suggest the equipment is not operating normally?</p>		
8.	<p>Are all services, cable trays, service risers and cupboards, pipe racks, ducting, etc. clean and free from dust residue build-up?</p>		
9.	<p>Are the premises generally uncongested?</p> <p>Are there designated segregated areas for different activities?</p> <p>Is attention paid to continuity of combustible materials throughout the building?</p> <p>Are there designated and clear safe access and egress/pedestrian routes?</p>		

	Housekeeping – Fire Prevention Contd.	Y/N	Comments
10.	<p>Is lighting adequate throughout the whole of the site, including external areas?</p> <p>Are there any failed or flickering bulbs?</p> <p>Are all combustible materials at least 1m away from the lights?</p>		
11.	<p>Are all floors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean, clear, dry and in good condition? • Free of oils and grease? • Provided with appropriate procedures for spillages? 		
12.	<p>Are all aisles and stairways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of appropriate size? • Kept clear of obstructions and storage? • Suitably marked, including warning signs? 		
13.	<p>Are floor voids:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included in the general cleaning schedules? • Viewed and verified as being clean and tidy? 		
14.	<p>Are any void areas and loft spaces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included in the general cleaning schedules? • Viewed and verified as being clean and tidy? • Supplied with electric insect killers (if required) that are non-combustible and regularly cleaned? 		
15.	<p>Are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycled batteries housed in a non-combustible container? • Waste storage arrangements adequate, with waste: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Removed from site, including the yard, at an appropriate frequency? ○ Appropriately segregated? • Any external skips or bins: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Non-combustible? ○ At least 10m from any building, site equipment or smoking shelter? ○ Appropriately located in relation to the site perimeter? ○ Secured and covered? 		

	Housekeeping – Fire Prevention Contd.	Y/N	Comments
16.	Are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All machines and equipment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In good condition? ○ Clean and free from residue, oil and dust build-up? • All oil leaks cleaned away, including in drip trays? • Ordinary combustible materials such as rags, paper and card prohibited where oil can leak? • Electrical cables, leads, plugs, and switches in good condition with no obvious signs of damage? • Portable Appliance Test (PAT) stickers visible on all portable appliances? 		
17.	Are all: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop areas tidy, clean, and free from oily deposits? • Hot work bays: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Segregated or screened-off with approved welding screens? ○ Clean, tidy and totally free from combustible materials? • Flammable and combustible liquids and aerosols stored in normally closed approved safety cabinets? • Tools stored in the correct designated place? 		
18.	Are dedicated battery charging areas totally sterile and free from combustible materials?		
19.	Are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage areas adequately separated from production areas? • Appropriate aisles and walkways maintained? • Incompatible materials or chemicals appropriately segregated? • Hazardous materials appropriately segregated? • Storage transportation procedures and practices consistent with the risk? • The legs of any storage racks formally inspected for signs of damage? 		
20.	Are all: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offices tidy and clean, with an enforced clean desk policy? • Stock rooms and stationery areas clean and tidy? 		

	Housekeeping – Fire Prevention Contd.	Y/N	Comments
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21.	<p>Are all:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laboratories, including any fume cupboards, tidy and clean, with an enforced clean desk policy? • Flammable and combustible liquids and aerosols stored in normally closed approved safety cabinets? • Laboratory books appropriately backed-up and stored in an appropriate fire safe? 		
22.	<p>Are all electrical panels, battery chargers, boilers and heaters located outside of a dedicated plant room:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean and free from dust? • Separated from combustible materials by at least 1.5m of clear space? • Protected from impact or physical damage? 		
23.	<p>Are all:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welfare, kitchen and canteen/restaurant areas tidy and clean – including storage and cold stores? • Cooking ranges clean? • Extract ducts and filters clean and free from grease residues? 		
24.	Additional comments:		

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