



Safety Scene

Keeping Your Plant Safe by Keeping It Tidy

by Molly E. Butz

Good housekeeping is a fundamental key to a safe workplace and requires just a little effort to maintain!

As the temperature begins to rise and the busy construction season whirls into full swing, housekeeping in a component manufacturing plant can seem like a daunting task. In an effort to get projects completed and out the door, everyone tends to work faster and potentially more carelessly. Yet, good housekeeping can be one of the easiest ways to avoid injuries on the job. According to the National Safety Council, workers are injured from slips, trips and falls more than any other on-the-job injury. In other words, the majority of injuries can be prevented as long as good housekeeping measures are used. Random tools, cutoff pieces of lumber and banding scraps pose a threat to each and every worker when they are left in walkways, aisles and other areas where they might present a hazard.

Bob Becht, President of Chambers Truss in Fort Pierce, FL has taken his own approach to a safe workplace. Digital camera in hand, Becht takes his daily walk-through of the plant with something specific in mind: housekeeping. Snapping pictures of safety hazards, he collects a series of photos and turns them into a PowerPoint® slide deck. At each monthly meeting, Becht presents the slide deck



Before: Messy pile of scrap and banding blocks the walkway and creates a potential tripping hazards.



After: Neat stack of scraps with banding put away makes for easy garbage removal and safe vicinity.

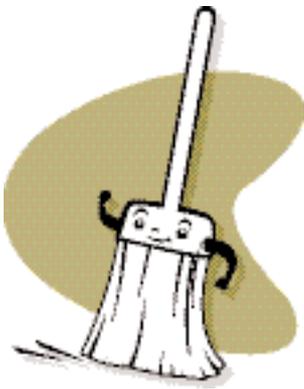
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at a glance

- ❑ Bob Becht, "Mr. Truss Photo," takes digital technology to plant safety.
- ❑ Showing safety and health issues in a PowerPoint® presentation helps the staff create innovative policies to improve workplace safety.

to his safety committee on a large screen. The safety committee uses the slides to pinpoint safety issues and formulate policies which are in turn passed on to the production managers for implementation. Becht has seen his "digital housekeeping" program immediately effect changes in the workplace. (To see an example of one of Bect's presentations, visit **Support Docs** at www.sbcmag.info.)

"The impact of the pictures leaves no room for argument. The production managers have no choice; they have to come on board with our safety policies, and the pic-



tures make [the importance of safety] impossible to ignore,” he explains. Becht continues to take pictures on a daily basis, and then he uses them in safety signs, presentations and emails. “If I see something out of place, or I notice something I want fixed, I email the production or maintenance manager with a brief explanation and a photo or two. This makes it easy for everyone.”

Digital cameras are an inexpensive way to maintain good housekeeping at any component manufacturing plant. And, as Becht has proved, it makes it easy for everyone involved. There are numerous simple digital cameras available for as little as \$100 and most of them easily attach to your PC.

Once you’ve identified the problem areas, developing policies to deal with these concerns will keep them from happening in the future. Here are just a few tips to keep your plant neat, clean and—most of all—safe:

- Plan ahead by assigning responsibilities for clean-up.
- Implement a program to make housekeeping part of the daily routine.
- Keep aisles and walkways clearly marked and free from debris/clutter.
- Clean up spilled liquid of any kind immediately.
- Properly dispose of oily or greasy rags.
- Close all cabinets and drawers when you are done using them.
- Properly store all tools/equipment.
- Neatly stack lumber and supplies.
- Use designated areas for smoking.

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Keep the electrical panels in the plant closed and free from clutter at all times for increased safety around equipment.

- Keep fire extinguishers and fire sprinklers marked and free of obstructions.
- Don't wait! Fix hazards immediately or report them to a supervisor who has the appropriate authority.

The best way to ensure good housekeeping is to develop an overall positive safety culture in your facility. The basic rules are simple:

- Everyone must place an emphasis on safety and health issues.
- Each employee must accept personal responsibility for his or her own safety and health as well as that of others.

With these basics in mind, you're on the right track to a safe and healthy work environment. **SBC**

To pose a question for this column or to learn more about WTCA's Operation Safety Program, contact WTCA Staff at 608/274-4849, email wtca@woodtruss.com, or view the Operation Safety demonstration online at www.wtcatko.com.

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6300 Enterprise Lane • Suite 200 • Madison, WI 53719
608/310-6706 phone • 608/271-7006 fax
www.sbcmag.info • admgr@sbcmag.info