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Good Housekeeping

Introduction

Housekeeping is the routine care and cleaning that needs to be acted on daily in order for a pork production facility to function safely and properly. Injuries and illnesses in farm settings often come about because the housekeeping of the farm has become slack, or an excessive amount of clutter has been allowed to accumulate; common injuries due to poor housekeeping include slips, trips, and falls.

It's a good idea to start your Safety Program with a clean-up campaign. Good housekeeping is one of the easiest and least expensive safety steps to take and maintain on your farm. It also is a sign of good farm management.

OSHA Rule(s)

The Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act) requires employers to comply with hazard-specific safety and health standards. In addition, pursuant to Section 5(a)(1) of the OSH Act, often referred to as the General Duty Clause, employers must provide their employees with a workplace free from recognized hazards likely to cause death or serious physical harm. OSHA has previously used the General Duty Clause to cite employers for exposing employees to potential physical harm including lacerations due to tears, sharp edges, and protruding pieces of metal siding along farm walls.

OSHA's General Requirements for Housekeeping related to Walking-Working Surfaces, CFR 1910.22, applies to all permanent places of employment, except where agricultural work only is performed, and are as follows:

1. Housekeeping.
 - All places of employment, passageways, storerooms, and service rooms shall be kept clean and orderly and in a sanitary condition.
 - The floor of every workroom shall be maintained in a clean and, so far as possible, a dry condition. Where wet processes are used, drainage shall be maintained, and false floors, platforms, mats, or other dry standing places should be provided where practicable.
 - To facilitate cleaning, every floor, working place, and passageway shall be kept free from protruding nails, splinters, holes, or loose boards.

2. Aisles and passageways.

- Where mechanical handling equipment is used, sufficient safe clearances shall be allowed for aisles, at loading docks, through doorways and wherever turns or passage must be made. Aisles and passageways shall be kept clear and in good repairs, with no obstruction across or in aisles that could create a hazard.
- Permanent aisles and passageways shall be appropriately marked.

Proper housekeeping as a method of fire control is also covered in 1910.37 (a)(3), requiring that exit routes must be free and unobstructed. No materials or equipment may be placed, either permanently or temporarily, within the exit route. 1910 Subpart E, part 3 "Fire Prevention Housekeeping " requires employers to control accumulations of flammable and combustible waste materials and residues so that they do not contribute to a fire emergency.

Even though agriculture is not covered in 1910.22 and 1910.37, producers have been cited by OSHA under the General Duty Clause for exit passages not kept clear of machinery (i.e., pressure washers) creating blocked exits, exits blocked with various items (e.g. dead piglets, dead boards, carts, and buckets), and unemptied trash receptacles in work areas.

Hazard

Good Housekeeping is a way to eliminate many the many hazards often cited as violations of the General Duty Clause (blocked entrances and exits; sticking doors; slip, trip and fall hazards; lack of or improperly stocked first aid kit; cuts & lacerations from bent/protruding objects on walls/floors;). Good housekeeping reduces injuries and accidents, improves morale, reduces fire potential, and can even make operations more efficient.

Prevention and Control

Tips for Establishing Good Housekeeping Habits

- Establish daily, weekly and monthly cleaning procedures.
- Identify cleanliness and safety expectations for all staff; for example, spills – particularly liquids spilled on the floor – need to be wiped up immediately.
- Require staff to maintain a clean workspace as part of their performance objectives.
- Establish a roster of individuals responsible for clean-up.

Checklist for Employers

- Clear debris and make sure that alleyways and exits are not blocked.
- Supply adequate trash receptacles to accommodate the amount of trash generated on a daily basis.
- See that trash is disposed of at least once a day.
- Store toxic and flammable materials in a secure location, and make sure they are clearly marked.
- Minimize dust to reduce the potential for illness or allergic reaction.
- Store materials in such a way that they are not in danger of falling over.
- Do not allow water to stand and/or drip; this will prevent the formation of mold and mildew.
- Provide adequate lighting.
- Make sure floor areas that cannot be cleaned continuously, like entranceways, have anti-slip surfaces.
- See that work areas are clean and orderly, and that spills are cleaned up promptly.
- Make sure bathrooms are cleaned and restocked daily.
- Impress on employees the importance of their daily involvement in keeping the workplace clean and safe.

Summary

All employees share the responsibilities of keeping their work stations and work areas free from the accumulation of materials. Additional responsibilities are often assigned to custodial employees or specific departmental employees. Good housekeeping levels are most easily maintained if they are completed throughout the day as needed. Pay special attention to slippery floors, potential hazards that may cause trips and falls, avoid waste accumulation and eliminate unsafe storage.

DO:

- Keep floors clean and clear of waste.
- Report areas with inadequate lighting to your supervisor.
- Put away tools and equipment that aren't being used.
- Clean up spills immediately.

DON'T:

- Use aisles and stairways as storage areas.
- Allow materials to build up on floors.
- Block emergency exits, fire equipment, or first aid stations with stored materials.
- Store compressed gases near heat sources.

Links

Housekeeping Training Guide (California OSHA) (<http://www.cdc.gov/elcosh/docs/d0200/d000263/d000263.pdf>)

Housekeeping Checklist (California OSHA) (<http://www.cdc.gov/elcosh/docs/d0200/d000234/d000234.pdf>)

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