

Loss Prevention Standards

Housekeeping – Fire Prevention

Introduction

To help reduce the potential for fires and losses it is crucial that organisations have a culture of good housekeeping as part of an overall risk management strategy. Good housekeeping standards are essential to loss prevention. These standards should apply throughout the whole of a site, i.e. internally, externally, the grounds, the yard, the roof, etc., and the standard of housekeeping should always aim to have incremental improvement.

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

Good Housekeeping

Housekeeping is not simply cleanliness as it also includes ensuring that a workplace is tidy and well-organised.

Examples of poor housekeeping include:

- Wall panel damage
- Accumulation of waste
- Untidiness and items not in the correct or appropriate 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

Statistics on fire losses confirm that incidents which occur in properties having a good level of housekeeping generally cause less damage than those with a poor level of housekeeping.

The elimination of hazards within the workplace will improve operational efficiency whilst also providing a safer environment in which individuals can work. Having clean, well-organised premises demonstrates to employees and customers that high levels of housekeeping are a key consideration for the organisation.

It is essential that the commitment to continually improve 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 to the organisation.

Housekeeping Standards

Documented standards should be introduced which specify individual responsibilities with regards to housekeeping arrangements, and such individuals should be provided with the equipment and materials required to undertake these tasks. These standards should detail matters such as the type and frequency of cleaning regimes in respect of all areas, including the workplace, machinery, plant rooms, hazardous locations, storage locations, on roofs, gutters, etc.

Cleaning should be frequent enough to prevent the build-up of any waste, dust, grease, etc. which 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, e.g. leaf accumulation on a roof in the autumn; foliage growth too close to a building in summer.

Employees must be encouraged to maintain good levels of housekeeping standards and report any concerns, with instructions and training provided as appropriate. It should be emphasised that poor levels of housekeeping will not be tolerated by the organisation.

A housekeeping inspection checklist and a programme of inspections and audits, carried out by trained individuals, should be introduced. This should monitor compliance with procedures and ensure that standards are maintained and improved upon. This should also take account of any reviews which may be required during or as a result of changes to the site. The frequency of inspections will vary between organisations as it will be dependent upon a number of different factors.

Checklist

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

Further risk management information can be obtained from [Aviva Risk Management Solutions](#)

Please Note

This document contains general information and guidance and is not and should not be relied on as specific advice. The document may not cover every risk, exposure or hazard that may arise and Aviva recommend that you obtain specific advice relevant to the circumstances. AVIVA accepts no responsibility or liability towards any person who may rely upon this document.

Appendix 1 – Housekeeping – Fire Prevention Checklist

Location	
Date	
Completed by (name and signature)	

	Housekeeping Checklist	Y/N	Comments
1.	<p>Buildings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there any sign of damage, wear and tear to the building exterior? • Exterior walls? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protected against vehicle and storage impact? • External doors? • Windows and window frames? <p>Roofs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover in good state of repair? • Any signs of damage or leakage? • Clear of debris, foliage and waste? • Any pooling or ponding? • Guttering clear of vegetation? • Roof drains clear of debris? <p>Internal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all building elements and structural members clean and free from dust, residue build-up, etc.? • Is there any sign of damage, wear and tear to the building interior? • Interior walls? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protected against vehicle and storage impact? • Internal doors and closure mechanisms maintained and in a good state of repair? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are all fire doors operable and not wedged open? 		
2.	<p>External Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is waste maintained at least 10m from buildings? • Is yard storage maintained at least 10m from buildings? • Is vegetation appropriately maintained and cut back? • Are yard services and equipment maintained away from waste, designated smoking areas, clear of vegetation and protected from impact (e.g. fan coil units, transformers, cooling towers, etc.)? • Are site boundaries appropriately maintained and consistent with site security philosophies? 		



	Housekeeping Checklist Contd.	Y/N	Comments
3.	<p>Smoking - If 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/restricted external areas? • Is smoking waste and 'ordinary combustible waste' segregated? 		
4.	<p>Plant Rooms (including any on roof)</p> <p>Are all:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant rooms • Utility or support rooms • Communications and server/IT rooms <p>Maintained clean, tidy, totally sterile and free from combustible storage and/or combustible materials? These rooms should only house the operational hardware and be as clean as they can be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all services, cable trays, service risers and cupboards, pipe racks, ducting, etc. clean and free from dust residue build-up? • Are there any noises or smells that suggest the equipment is not operating normally? 		
5.	<p>Premises Layout</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the premises generally uncongested? • Are there designated segregated areas for different activities? • Is attention paid to continuity of combustible materials throughout the building? • Are there designated and clear safe access and egress/pedestrian routes? 		
6.	<p>Lighting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is lighting adequate throughout the whole of the site? • Including external areas? • Are there any failed or flickering bulbs? • Are all combustible materials at least 1m away from the lights? 		
7.	<p>Floors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all floors clean, clear, dry and in good condition? • Are all floors free of oils and grease with procedures for spillages? 		
8.	<p>Services, Cable Trays, Service Risers and Pipe-racks</p> <p>Are all services, cable trays, service risers and cupboards, pipe racks, ducting, etc. clean and free from dust residue build-up?</p>		

	Housekeeping Checklist Contd.	Y/N	Comments
9.	Floor Voids <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are floor voids included in the general cleaning schedules? • Have these been viewed and verified as being clean and tidy? 		
10.	Loft Spaces and Voids <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are any void areas and loft spaces included in the general cleaning schedules? • Have these been viewed and verified as being clean and tidy? • Electric insect killers - are the receptacles non-combustible and regularly cleaned out? 		
11.	Aisles and Stairways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all aisles and stairways of appropriate size and kept clear of obstructions and storage? • Are they suitably marked including warning signs? 		
12.	Waste <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is waste removed from site, including the yard, at an appropriate frequency? • Is waste appropriately segregated? • Are recycled batteries housed in a non-combustible container? • Are waste storage arrangements adequate? • Are any external skips or bins etc.: <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? 		
13.	Machinery and Equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all machines and equipment in good condition? • Are all machines and equipment clean and free from residue, oil and dust build-up? • Are all oil leaks cleaned away, including in drip trays? • Where oil can leak, are ordinary combustible materials such as rags, paper, card etc. prohibited? These can act as a wicking agent. Non-combustible absorbent materials should be used. • Are electrical cables, leads, plugs, switches in good condition with no obvious signs of damage? • Are Portable Appliance Test stickers apparent on all portable appliances? 		



	Housekeeping Checklist Contd.	Y/N	Comments
14.	Workshops & Maintenance Areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all workshop areas tidy, clean and free from oily deposits? • Are all 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? • Are all flammable and combustible liquids, aerosols, etc. stored in normally closed approved safety cabinets? • Are all tools stored in the correct designated place? 		
15.	Battery Charging Are dedicated battery charging areas maintained free from combustible materials and totally sterile?		
16.	Stock and Storage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is storage adequately separated from production areas? • Are appropriate aisles and walkways maintained in the storage? • Are incompatible materials/chemicals appropriately segregated? • Are hazardous materials appropriately segregated? • Are storage transportation procedures and practices consistent with the risk? • Are the legs to any storage racks formally inspected for signs of damage? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is there any damage? 		
17.	Offices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there an enforced clean desk policy? • Are all offices tidy and clean? • Are all stock rooms and stationary areas clean and tidy? 		
18.	Laboratories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there an enforced clean desk policy? • Are all laboratories including any fume cupboards tidy and clean? • All flammable and combustible liquids, aerosols, etc. stored in normally closed approved safety cabinets? • Are laboratory books appropriately backed up and stored in an appropriate fire safe? 		

	Housekeeping Checklist Contd.	Y/N	Comments
19.	Electrical Panels, Battery Chargers, Boilers and Heaters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all electrical panels, battery chargers, boilers and heaters located outside of a dedicated plant room: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clean and free from dust? ○ Separated from combustible materials by at least 1.5m clear space? ○ Protected from impact/physical damage? 		
20.	Site Kitchen and Employee Welfare Facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all welfare, kitchen (including storage and cold stores) and canteen areas tidy and clean? • Are cooking ranges clean? • Are extract ducts and filters clean and free from grease residues? 		
21.	Additional comments:		

