



## *Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning*

# GOOD HOUSEKEEPING/ GOOD OPERATION PRACTICES

## FACT SHEET

An easy and low cost method for reducing operational cost can be achieved by implementing good housekeeping initiatives in your business. Good housekeeping practises are procedural, administrative or institutional measures that a business can adopt with the aim of preventing waste and pollution. Good housekeeping practices are often simple common sense that focus more on the human side of business operations rather than the technological side. These good business practices generate less waste by making existing processes more efficient. It is important that a company reassesses its housekeeping practices regularly because much money and resources are wasted due to lack of care or ignorance.

### **WHY implement?**

Exercising good housekeeping practices can require no capital cost and usually entails implementing simple changes that results in reduced emissions, wastes, operational costs and increased productivity as well as increased workplace safety. Good housekeeping practices in the business place also contribute to:

- Preventing accidents and fires;
- Reducing disposal costs;
- More effective use of space within the work place;
- Better hygienic conditions leading to improved health conditions; and
- Reduced operation and handling time.

### **HOW to implement?**

- Housekeeping practices can be implemented through various initiatives, namely:
- **Waste segregation.** This is done by preventing mixing of hazardous waste with non hazardous waste (to reduce disposal costs), storing materials in compatible groups and isolating liquid waste from solid waste.
- **Preventative maintenance program.** This involves maintaining a complete preventative maintenance schedule to ensure that maintenance problems do not go unchecked and become bigger problems than necessary.
- **Training and awareness.** By providing training to employees in: proper equipment operation, how to minimize material losses during accidents, how to detect and minimize material losses to air, water and land. Awareness raising should highlight the economic and environmental impact of waste generations and disposal.

- **Effective Supervision.** Top Management need to show their commitment and support to pollution prevention programs by committing to closer supervision, which may improve productivity and reduce waste generation.
- **Employee participation.** Environmental or Cleaner Production forums should be created which allow the employees and management to discuss potential waste reductions areas and possible ideas for implementation. Employees should also feel that they are playing a role in the cleaner production programme. There should be an open dialogue of ideas and suggestions and possibly rewards for sections if ideas provide for major savings.
- **Inventory control.** A record of purchasing of raw materials needs to be kept up to date in order to avoid unnecessary purchases. The over-ordering of raw materials may cause products to exceed their expiry dates, occupy large amounts of space and could pose a health risk, in the case of an accident. Regular checks should be done to ensure that the raw materials are being used correctly. A system of **first-in, first-out** should be set up to ensure that raw materials do not expire. There also need to be clear guidelines on how to dispose of raw materials in the correct manner.
- **Monitoring.** Monitoring your water consumption allows you to spot a sudden increase in consumption that is most often caused by leaks and malfunction of equipment. Without monitoring, these leaks often go unnoticed for some time and are responsible for unnecessarily huge water bills.
- **Workplace tidiness/safety.** The workplace should be kept clean and safe by: keeping tools, floors and equipment clean; hiding hazards; making employees aware of the risk of their jobs and having the emergency safety measures in place; having adequate ear protection for workers where noise levels reach higher than 85dB. Keeping the workplaces safe and tidy helps create a smooth flow of goods as well as a good image to visitors.

- Donating recyclable waste to a non-profit organisation in your area reduces the quantity of waste disposed, which can reduce your disposal costs and enhance your social responsibility.
- An effective method to ensure that housekeeping is done is for management to prepare a checklist to suit the requirements of the workplace. To view a good housekeeping checklist visit [Good housekeeping in Industry Archive](#)

### Sources and Useful Links:

- UNEP (United Nations Environmental Program) CP:  
[http://www.unep.org/pc/cp/understanding\\_cp/cp\\_industries.htm](http://www.unep.org/pc/cp/understanding_cp/cp_industries.htm)
- Security Solutions:  
<http://securitysa.com/regular.asp?pkIRegularID=2156&pkIIssueID=505&pkICategoryID=5>
- Good housekeeping in Industry Archive:  
<http://www.osh.dol.govt.nz/order/catalogue/archive/goodhousekeeping.pdf>
- <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/hwtr/p2/sectors/Connfact.htm#PollutPrevGoodOper>
- Cleaner Metal Finishing Industry Production Project, SA (October 2003), Electroplating Industry Cleaner Production Catalogue.

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The entire range of fact sheets can be found by visiting the [www.capegateway.gov.za](http://www.capegateway.gov.za) web page.