

MRU HEALTH & SAFETY NEWSLETTER

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY – MAY 2019

What's new?

EH&S has released a **[Safe Work Practice: Workplace Housekeeping](#)**.

Effective housekeeping is a cost effective way to improve workplace health and safety. It can help control or eliminate workplace hazards. If the sight of paper, debris, clutter and spills is accepted as normal, then other more serious hazards may be taken for granted.

Housekeeping is not just cleanliness. It includes:

- keeping work areas neat and orderly
- maintaining work areas and floors free of slip and trip hazards
- removing waste materials (e.g. paper, cardboard, food) and other fire hazards from work areas.

Effective housekeeping results in:

- fewer tripping and slipping incidents in clutter-free and spill-free work areas
- decreased fire hazards
- lower worker exposures to various substances (e.g. dusts, vapours)
- better control of tools and materials, including inventory and supplies
- better hygienic conditions
- more effective use of space
- reduced property damage by improving preventive maintenance
- improved morale
- improved productivity

Spring is a great time for cleaning and de-cluttering. Take a few minutes to clean and tidy your work area before heading off on your summer break.

Good things to consider are areas that haven't been dusted in a while, piles of paper that need to be filed or scanned, or stashes of food or clothing that you won't need again this year. Future-you will appreciate the clean slate when you're back from vacation.

Looking for more information on housekeeping?

The Canadian Centre of Occupational Health & Safety (CCOHS) is a trusted advisor on health and safety topics across Canada.

Below are links from the CCOHS with useful housekeeping information:

- [Workplace housekeeping: Basic guide](#)

Example housekeeping checklists:

- [General housekeeping checklist](#)
- [Maintenance and construction housekeeping checklist](#)

Alberta Occupational Health & Safety

Under Alberta Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) legislation, housekeeping is identified in Alberta OHS Code Part 12 - Section 185.

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[AUGUST 2019](#)

HEALTH & SAFETY NEWSLETTER

What's new?

The Office Position Hazard Assessment (PHA) has been posted on the EH&S website. If you primarily work in offices or classroom spaces, take a minute to review the PHA to learn about common office hazards and how you can keep yourselves and others safe.

Although office and instructional jobs are low risk positions, there are still hazards around campus that you should be aware of. They may be physical, ergonomic, psychological, chemical, and/or biological and can lead to injuries or illness.

Examples of office-based hazards include:

- Items stored unsafely (e.g too high and/or on uneven surfaces)
- Items blocking doorways, which can make access, egress, or escape difficult
- Overloaded electrical circuits or unattended space heaters, which can lead to a fire
- Poor housekeeping, such as dust build up or food debris which can affect air quality or lead to pest infestations
- Ergonomics, such as repetitive motion or long periods of sitting

Perform regular workplace inspections to identify new hazards, assess risks, and monitor existing hazard controls to ensure they remain effective.

Informal inspections are as simple as scanning your workplace when you arrive to make sure the space is free of hazards and safe to work in. If you see a simple hazard that you are able to control (e.g. coffee spill, housekeeping issue, small appliances left on), you can fix it yourself. If the repair is outside of your scope (e.g. large or hazardous spills, broken furniture, electrical or plumbing issues), bring the concern to your direct supervisor or submit a Frontline request to have an expert repair it.

Looking for more information on office safety?

The Canadian Centre of Occupational Health & Safety (CCOHS) is a trusted advisor on health and safety topics across Canada.

Below are links from the CCOHS with useful office safety information:

- [General Office Safety](#)
- [Office ergonomics quick fact sheets](#)

Alberta Occupational Health & Safety

Under Alberta Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) legislation, it is everyone's responsibility to keep the workplace free of hazards. Do your part in the community and be mindful of the safety of yourself and those around you.

Safety Moment

Keep yourself and your workplace clean to reduce the risk of injury or illness!

Maintain a clean work space and remove contaminated clothing and wash your hands after completing a task to reduce the spread of contaminants across the University.

Contaminated clothing may include, but is not limited to:

- Lab coats - remove when leaving the lab (may be kept on if going directly from one lab to another or if moving hazardous materials from one space to another)
- Work gloves - remove before touching door knobs, especially in communal spaces
- Coveralls - clean regularly to minimize dust and debris
- Respirator masks - replace cartridges / filters and clean regularly as recommended by manufacturer

Feedback welcome!

If you have suggestions on future newsletter content, please email ehs@mtroyal.ca with your suggestion. We would love to hear from you!

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