

## **Keeping a Clean and Safe Office or Classroom Space**

The office environment is more than simply furniture placement. The environment of an office includes issues such as cleanliness, order, and maintenance.

Injuries in office settings often come about because the “housekeeping” of the office has become slack, or if an excessive amount of paper, products or other materials create a daunting environment.



Cleanliness and good housekeeping can also reduce allergic reactions to dust/mold and prevent illness such as the flu or Norfolk virus.

### **Hazards**

#### ***Piles***

Papers and materials are on the floor or piled precariously on desks and tables. In addition to the level of stress that accompanies an untidy office, the paper menace is a safety hazard in that it is highly flammable (particularly if stored next to an electrical outlet) and also has the potential of falling off shelves or file cabinets and injuring passersby.

#### ***Rest Room Sanitation***

Rest Rooms should be cleaned and sanitized at least once a day. Paper should not be permitted to litter the floor. Bath tissue, soap and paper towels should be available in adequate supplies. If desired, air freshener sprays or solids should be available. Never light a candle and leave it unattended in a rest room.

#### ***Toxic Chemicals***

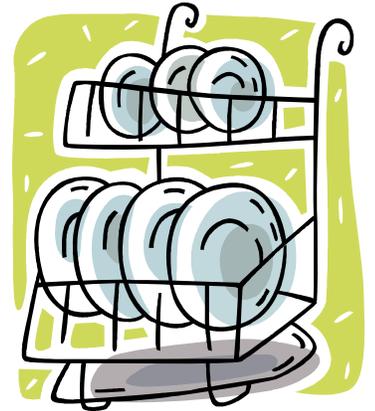
Storage of toxic chemicals and cleaning supplies can be problematic particularly if chemicals are reactive if combined. Chemicals should be stored in separate closet or cabinet from cleaning supplies. Beware of chemicals such as linseed oil which can spontaneously combust.

#### ***Cleaning Supplies***

Cleaning supplies should be clearly marked and stored in spill-proof containers. These products should also be stored above counter-level to avoid potential danger if the office has young visitors. The phone number of the local poison control office should be clearly posted on the door of the storage area.

## ***Kitchen and Food***

- Dirt, grime and garbage if left to accumulate can create health hazards and spread disease. Have sufficient trash receptacles located in kitchens, staff lounges, break rooms and other locations where food is consumed.
- Kitchens need to be clean and floors maintained. Spills on the counters or floors need to be mopped up promptly. Injuries can be sustained from slips and falls on wet floors.
- Kitchen counters need to be clean and free from spills and grime.
- Refrigerators should be cleaned out at least once a week, and stoves/microwaves need to be wiped down at least daily.
- Trash must be properly disposed on at least a daily basis to avoid attracting insects, mice, rats and other vermin. Rotting food, even in a refrigerator, is a health hazard.
- Teachers and Instructional Aides should be discouraged from consuming food at their desks, or in places that are not specifically designated for food consumption.



## **Recommendations**

- Store toxic chemicals and cleaning supplies in separate areas
- Establish daily, weekly and monthly cleaning procedures. For example, bathrooms, kitchen counters, dishes, work surfaces, phones and keyboards should be cleaned on a daily basis. Determine how often other parts of the office should be cleaned and establish a roster of individuals responsible for clean-up.
- Standards of cleanliness should be put into place for each office and/or work cubicle. Staff performance objectives should include a requirement to maintain a clean workspace.
- Implement a paper recycling program to cut down on paper clutter and buildup
- Identify cleanliness and safety expectations for all staff—for example—spills, particularly liquids spilled on the floor, need to be wiped up immediately.