

Health & Safety, Edinburgh Napier University

# Housekeeping Policy

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## Contents

1.	Introduction.....	3
2.	Workshops, laboratories and classrooms .....	3
3.	Office and workrooms .....	3

## 1. Introduction

A major cause of accidents is undoubtedly poor standards of housekeeping and, in general, a safe working area is also a tidy area.

## 2. Workshops, laboratories and classrooms

Equipment, apparatus and materials left lying around and out of their normal storage area may present a hazard to personnel. Waste combustible material that is allowed to accumulate can also pose a serious fire risk and presents a risk to life if in emergency escape routes.

Equipment, apparatus, etc. which is not immediately required should always be returned to a safe storage place. Work surfaces, machinery, tools and general equipment should be left in a clean and safe condition. Unwanted materials, particularly combustible and flammable materials, should be disposed of safely and promptly using the appropriate disposal arrangements.

Spillages must be cleaned up immediately by a person with an understanding of the particular hazards associated with the spilled substance and the precautions to be taken. Where an emergency response is required due to a spillage that has health and safety implications, everyone must follow this link.

PLEASE NOTE – If a spillage/ gas release or other hazardous incident takes place that is deemed as an emergency situation the [emergency procedures](#) require to be initiated.

Entrances, exits and corridors must be kept free from obstruction and combustible materials must not be deposited in fire emergency exit routes.

Walkways within canteens, rooms, teaching spaces and lecture theatres, including aisles in classrooms, are to be kept free of obstruction. Stored items must not obstruct or obscure fire alarm call points, firefighting equipment, emergency procedure notices and building services controls, e.g. electrical switches, gas taps, water valves, etc. Gas, water and electrical supplies should always be turned off when not required, especially at the end of the day.

Avoid creating trip hazards with laptop and computer power leads and IT connections.

Whenever possible congestion is to be avoided and the need to retain redundant equipment, materials, etc. which occupies much needed space requires to be reviewed regularly.

## 3. Office and workrooms

To minimise the risk of accidents to room occupants, visitors and other staff, e.g. cleaning staff, rooms should be kept tidy. Files of paper, books etc. should not be allowed to accumulate on floor areas especially near doors and passageways. Room furniture should be arranged to ensure safe access and egress.

Electrical cables should be kept clear from areas where they are likely to sustain damage, e.g. chairs, filing cabinet drawers, etc. Where cables cross the floor likely to be walked on, protective covers

should be fitted to reduce the risk of tripping and a regime of checking them on a regular basis to ensure that they are free from damage. Note:- only inspect cables when disconnected from the power supply at the wall.

Wherever possible the use of extension leads should be avoided. Where additional socket outlets are required, a maintenance request should be submitted to the Property and Facilities Helpdesk. Only electrical equipment, e.g. heaters, issued by the University should be used by staff on University property. Electrical equipment must not create a hazard with its location or proximity to flammable or ignition sources. Damaged electrical equipment and cables should be withdrawn from use and referred to the appropriate department or contractor for repair, and also identified that they must not be used until repaired. Staff and students wishing to introduce their own electrical equipment for use in the University are obliged to prove the equipment is safe for use. The use of multiple extensions being plugged into each other is strictly forbidden as this could cause a build-up of heat and the potential for fire and electrical failure. Kettles and other high power consuming equipment must be dedicated to a single socket with no other item plugged into the same socket, as this could cause an overload of that socket.

Where materials are stored on shelves, appropriate provision must be made to gain safe access to upper shelves. Shelves must be secured to the wall if not stable when free-standing and must not be overloaded. Heavy loads should be placed at waist height and if possible the loads split into smaller loads to help reduce the risk of injury to the individual(s) moving the loads. The storage of items above head height requires to be risk assessed, however it is **not** advisable to store heavy or dangerous items above head height.

Equipment should be switched off when it is not required, particularly at the end of the day.

Since fire is a major potential hazard in office areas, due care must be taken to reduce the risk of an outbreak of fire or the consequences of such. Consequently, any flammable solutions used in offices should only be kept in small quantities, properly stored, labelled and dispensed. These flammable solutions must also be included in the university hazardous database and kept up to date. Large quantities of wastepaper, boxes and other flammable materials should not be allowed to accumulate. Do not keep fire doors open unless they are on an approved hold-back device that will release the door when the fire alarm sounds.

Firefighting equipment (extinguishers) must not be used inappropriately, e.g. to hold open doors.