



# OSHA + EPA Awareness Update

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### Workplace Organization

It's the start of a new year and many die casting organizations are wondering what improvement programs to work on for 2014. One program that will help improve quality, environmental performance, and employee health and safety is called Workplace Organization.

Workplace Organization accomplishes many tasks:

- Tackles waste
- Reduces in-process travel time
- Eliminates damage due to clutter
- Reduces obsolescence due to disorganized storage practices
- Engages employees
- Improves communication between management and hourly workforce
- Enables activity itself to become the start of a culture change within the workplace
- Emphasizes continual improvement
- Gives many small wins to celebrate as process moves forward
- Changes thinking of employees while at work

### 5 S Program

One type of Workplace Organization is the Japanese 5 S Program. Translated into English, 5 S stands for:

1. Sort: Clear the work area
2. Set in order: Designate locations
3. Shine: Cleanliness and workplace appearance
4. Standardize: Everyone doing things in the same manner
5. Sustain: Ingrain within the workplace organization and culture

### Step 1 – Sort

Sorting is about defining what is needed at each location and/or department and clearing the work area. One person cannot effectively define what is needed in a work area; therefore, a team approach is required. Some tips:

- Determine what is not needed in the work area. If an item is not needed to make the product, support the operation, or promote safety, then it probably should not be kept in the direct work area.
- Evaluate the proper quantities of items to remain in work areas.
- Don't just look at core equipment and tools; think about materials, supplies, paperwork, and refuse.
- Use data to determine frequency of use; the less frequently an item is used, the farther from the work area it should be stored. If an item is not needed or used within a 48-hour time period, that item should not be in work area.

### Step 2 – Set in Order

Step two involves organization and orderliness. There is a place for everything and everything must be in its place. Using designated locations for storage requires discipline and attention to detail from everybody in work area. However, having designated storage locations offers many benefits:

- Saves time and reduces wasted effort and frustration by employees
- Allows employees to exert visual control over their operations; at a glance, an employee can see if things are in place and if more materials, supplies, or tools are needed

Modes of storage can include the floor, racks and shelving, flow racks, cabinets, carts, storage bins, etc.

### Step 3 – Shine

There are three aspects to shine:

1. Getting the work area clean
2. Maintaining work area appearance
3. Using preventive measures to keep work area clean



How does one maintain an appropriate appearance within the work area? There are many options for “shining,” including using paint and lighting, removing clutter, collecting dust, minimizing spills, and improving routine maintenance of facility. But before starting to clean a work area, it is important to:

1. Take time to plan
2. Determine what to clean the area with
3. Determine who is responsible for doing the cleaning

Many organizations have found that productivity and safety performance improve as housekeeping in the work area improves. Instilling in employees the idea of continuous cleaning all day long, as opposed to cleaning up the area in last fifteen minutes of each day, makes routine maintenance easier and builds it into performance expectations.

#### Step 4 – Standardize

Standardizing involves putting a system in place to ensure that everyone does things the same way. It is about creating best work practices and getting everyone to “copy exactly” using these best practices in the same way—everywhere and every time. Roles and respon-

sibilities must be clearly defined. Correspondingly, training the workforce is very important to make sure that employees know and understand the tasks ahead of them and the tasks required daily to maintain the workplace organization.

Management must maintain the momentum and not allow the Workplace Organization tasks to become static but, instead, to continuously evolve and grow as needed. Management must set the tone and lead by example. Management must provide time for the workforce to develop and implement required Workplace Organization changes. At the same time, employees must embrace Workplace Organization and improvement principles and practices and help implement them within their own departments.

#### Step 5 – Sustain

To sustain a Workplace Organization improvement program, the 5 S concepts must be ingrained into your work culture. This requires constant communication, continual reinforcement of the “whats and whys” of Workplace Organization, and discussion of how your organization has improved over time. It is important to give many examples of small wins to reinforce the concept as valuable.



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Management must provide leadership, commitment, and allocation of the time required and resources necessary for success. Continuous recognition for a job well done becomes the fuel to keep the effort dynamic.

Beyond this, there are several tactics that organizations can further implement to prevent backsliding and to sustain the improvements already made:

- Use internal audits to serve as ongoing checks
- Use teamwork approach to build common effort
- Solicit ideas from all employees for improvements to make everybody feel they are part of the process and team
- Address problems immediately as they arise

### A Final Step – Implementation

Once the organization completes the 5 S steps, implementation remains. The following components are required for an effective organization-wide implementation strategy:

- Determine leadership team
- Build infrastructure
- Launch communications
- Train teams in 5 S techniques
- Begin 5 S pilots
- Establish best practices
- Develop full rollout plan
- Continually evaluate and adjust programs

Senior management needs to create the environment needed and give visibility to Workplace Organization to help ensure the long-term viability of the organization. The Workplace Organization effort should be designed to fit within your organization's existing improvement

structure. Subcommittees can be used to divide and conquer in areas such as communication, training, project support, determination of best practices, purchasing, and shop floor layout.

As with any process, as lessons are learned, the organization must make improvements. Modify and strengthen the organization's infrastructure, select new tools to add to the arsenal, develop improved methodologies, and always communicate to your employees and challenge them to constantly improve their work areas. Publicize success wherever it is found. Highlighting the benefits that new practices have brought to your organization or area will encourage employees to respond positively and transfer Workplace Organization concepts into other non-productive areas within the organization.

Workplace Organization is much more than just house-keeping. This concept is a powerful approach to improve the workplace through:

- Organization
- Proper arrangement
- Attention to detail
- Orderliness designed into processes
- Designation of storage locations
- Implementation of preventive measures to ensure work areas stay clean
- Cultural change within workforce
- Application of concepts into other areas of business to create long-term solutions

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