

Above-Average Housekeeping For Vehicle Service Operations

Proper housekeeping efforts to keep service bays clean and clear of clutter should be a standard practice for a dealer's service operation. The benefits in keeping the service area clean outweigh the argument used against good housekeeping practices. Above-average housekeeping is a proactive practice in reducing injuries and increasing efficiency as well as employee morale. There are no upsides for a poorly kept service area.

Above-average housekeeping and work practices can include:

1. Placement of parts removed to the rear of the vehicle or off to one side, to reduce technicians having to walk over tools or parts while working or access to procure tools or equipment.
2. Immediate clean-up of any fluids in the area where work is being performed, or a common walk aisle to reduce the exposure for a significant injury. (Some service operations have a specific person performing constant cleaning operations).
3. Rolling carts with flat tops can be used alongside a working technician to place parts as they are removed off a vehicle. This practice eliminates parts becoming a trip hazard as well as reduces body mechanics for the constant bending to place and retrieve parts off the floor. Carts allow convenient access to parts and tools for reassembly.
4. Technician's work benches kept clean. Injuries to hands occur when work benches are cluttered and technicians attempt to perform their work while holding parts in their hands, or lap, due to having no clear work space.
5. Periodic management review and/or involvement in regular housekeeping practices. In some above average service operations, management assists in 'helping' technicians decide what needs to be thrown away, or moved to appropriate storage, to keep work areas clean and free of clutter.
6. Require a standard practice for service technicians to keep lubricants, cleaners, absorbents, and any other cleaning product in their appropriate storage cabinet.
7. Tools should be in their appropriate place on the technician's tool bench or rolling tool tray, during times of repeated use (and not left lying around on the floor).

Good housekeeping practices can have positive effects for a company's service operation:

1. It can improve morale for the way employees feel about their employer (understanding that their employer cares about them instead of just a production shop).
2. It can instill 'pride of ownership' in how the technicians treat their work space.
3. It can reduce the exposure to certain injuries common to dealership service operations. Fewer injuries also affect the morale in a positive way as well as the company's bottom line.