

Housekeeping For Vehicle Service Operations

Proper housekeeping efforts to keep service bays clean and clear of clutter should be a standard practice for a dealership service operation. The benefits in keeping the service area clean outweigh the argument used against good housekeeping practices. There is no upside for poorly kept service areas. The first step is acknowledging the need to improve current practices.

Undesirable housekeeping practices can produce:

1. Potential employee injuries (slip or trip and fall type incidents),
2. Employee behaviors toward their work performed,
3. Lack of respect toward their employer, and
4. Undesirable first impression of work areas for new employees and customers.

Service operations might operate differently if they understood the costs for injuries and how they affect profitability. For the average back strain or slip and fall injury, an additional amount of service work would be needed just to break even. In addition, if an injured employee has a lack of respect for their workplace and/or employer, it may set up a situation where the employee attempts to lengthen time-off.

Poor housekeeping practices can include parts and tools on the floor (or fluid spills), where technicians work or walk to get to tools. In some cases, old parts or containers of discarded oil filters are left lying around due to a lack of desire to take proper care of them. Injuries involving sprained ankles, broken wrists, or hips as well as lower back strains occur, which require extensive amounts of time to heal. Technicians can incur upper body strains or lacerations while working on raised vehicles or when they slip or trip with the result of injury.

Good housekeeping practices are an indication for pride of ownership from the technicians on the care and condition of their work area.

To achieve good housekeeping practices:

1. Communicate the company housekeeping policy,
2. Provide clear directions and/or examples of a properly kept service area,
3. Provide time (end of day, week, or month) for employees to perform housekeeping tasks, and
4. Conduct periodic surveys.