**5S Program**

**Overview**

The 5S Program is a methodology to aid in maintaining housekeeping. 5S principles are best summarized by the saying “a place for everything and everything in its place.” It is a way of thinking about cleaning and organization as a whole, not focusing on just “cleaning.”

The 5S methodology originated in Japan, by the Toyota company. In Japanese, these 5 words are Seiri, Seiton, Seisou, Seiketsu, and Shitsuke. However, those words translate to English as the following:

* Sort: Eliminate that which is not needed.
* Straighten: Organize what remains after sorting.
* Shine: Thoroughly clean and inspect the work area.
* Standardize: Write a standard for the 5S area.
* Sustain: Consistently apply the standards.

This method is a low-cost approach to housekeeping. Another way to look at this program is the “touch it once” ideal, which is basically just the idea that if you are completing a sweeping task, and you finish with the broom, do not set it to the side to put away later; just go ahead and put it away once you are finished with it. If you are using a can of brake clean, take the extra few seconds to put it where it goes once you are finished using it. Doing this not only eliminates the need to go back and put things away later, but it also means that someone else does not need to go looking for the broom or that can of brake clean.

**Implementation**

This method may take a while to implement. If there are areas that need organizing or cleaning, take the time to “overhaul” the areas to “start fresh.” Take a picture before as well.

Sort

The initial first step of the 5S program is to sort everything. Remove everything from the area (i.e., a storage closet, a toolbox, or any other work space) and first decide what, if anything, can be removed from the area. Do not keep things in an area if they are not needed. Throw away trash. Remove any tools that may not be necessary. If there are any worn tools or equipment, repair or replace them.

Straighten

The next step is to organize what remains after you decide what does not need to be in the work area. During this step, think about where everything is used, and think about how the work area can be organized to make things as efficient as possible. For example, if an air nozzle is used to blow away dust, place a hook near where it is used, to hang the nozzle on. Think about what kind of racks, hooks, containers, etc. can be used to further organization.

For anything that does not need to go back into the work area, decide where it does belong and put it in that area, to be organized when you move to that area. If it doesn’t seem to go anywhere, it may not be needed at all and can be thrown away or gotten rid of.

Shine

First, clean the work area. Wipe down shelves, handrails, platforms, etc. Sweep the floors. Blow out any dusty areas (using proper PPE!). While you are cleaning, inspect the work area. If any shelves are loose, secure them. If any handrails are loose, secure those as well. If the floor is damaged, repair the floor. Keeping areas clean will help you to see if there are areas that need to be repaired; and repairs are generally much cheaper than replacing things.

Standardize

Once you get the area clean and organized, write a standard to outline the proper steps to keeping the area up to that standard. “Clean” does not always mean the same thing to different people. One way to think about these standards is to make things clear enough that anyone can do the job. For example, the steps for cleaning and maintaining the conference room should be clear enough that someone who works in the maintenance shop could complete the tasks.

Take a picture of the cleaned area as well, so that there is a visual in place for how the area is supposed to look. That way, there is no confusion regarding what the standard is instructing.

Sustain

The final step in the 5S program is to sustain it. You can use sweep sheets, which outline the standard’s steps and the expectations. The sweep sheet tasks can be checked off as they are completed.

These standards can be set for any timeline that is reasonable. Some areas need to be cleaned every day, some can be completed weekly, and some can be as spaced out as monthly items to be completed. Set up the standards to whatever works for your plant.