

# Sweep

## Overview of Module

Formally defined, in the context of 5S, sweep means to clean in such a way as to identify and remove the sources of contamination.



Obviously this definition is much more than many make this step out to be. You see, a common misunderstanding about 5S is that it's about sweeping and cleaning up. It's not.

In fact, it's about NOT cleaning. Here's how it works: first, we do an initial physical Sweep to make everything clean by picking up trash, sweeping the floors clean, and wiping down machines and equipment. Then, we do a visual Sweep each day and notice where things are getting dirty again. And during these daily sweeps we write down the reasons why the mess occurred, and take action to eliminate the root causes.

## Cleaning means inspection

Another important concept is that cleaning means inspection. If you've ever hand washed and waxed a car you know that there's no better way to find all the little dings and dents on your car since you're touching it and looking at far more closely than you normally would. Well the exact same thing occurs in our offices, factories, and hospitals when cleaning things.

## Why Sweep?

1. First of all, organizations that struggle with the sweep or shine step often suffer from poor morale since simple things like sunlight never makes it through the grime on the windows. And studies have shown that the environment people live and work in has a direct impact on how they behave. Some even go so far as to say... live like an animal, behave like an animal.
2. Another benefit of sweep is that it improves safety by reducing things like slips and falls along with a myriad of other things.
3. Sweeping also helps companies save money since cleaning up things like oil leaks leads to the repair of equipment that created the mess which ultimately prevents breakdowns. In fact research has shown again and again that dirt and

contamination are a chief reason for machine breakdowns, as are things like fluid leaks, air leaks, and dirty air filters.

## Clean with Meaning

The first thing we must always do during the sweep step is clean with meaning. In other words, think about how to eliminate the cause of the dirt altogether? And as we clean with meaning there are 4 key points we must stay laser focused on.

1. They are to first restore things to good conditions. So, if your workplace is a complete disaster... WE WILL need to get busy and clean it up.
2. The second step is to find the sources of fifth. So, for example, if the printer in your office is leaking ink don't just clean it up... find out why it's leaking.
3. This leads us directly to the 3rd step which is to eliminate the root causes of the issue altogether. So, in the case of the printer this may mean bringing in the printer repairman or fixing the problem ourselves.
4. Finally, the last point calls us to reduce the need to clean at all. Very rarely will we ever get to a point where no cleaning is ever needed... but this doesn't mean we shouldn't aim for this ideal state by staying focused on finding the sources of filth and eliminating them.

## The Sweep Recipe

1. Own the Zone. The first step is to assign zones of responsibility. Everyone should be assigned a zone within the area and be made responsible for keeping it in order. Key considerations should be the time it takes to do daily maintenance, and the impact the member has with respect to keeping the area clean. In other words, everyone should clean their own room.
2. Set Standards. The second step is to set standards to sweep. Just because many of the daily cleaning operations don't actually add value to our product or service doesn't mean that we can't create standard work for them. By doing this we can find ways to improve or eliminate the tasks we're doing.
3. Keep to the clock. The third step is to keep to the clock. If anyone has kids they know that if you allow them all day to clean their rooms, that's exactly how long it will take. Therefore, be sure to determine and indicate the allowed time to perform the daily activity with regards to 5S.
4. Start at the same time. The fourth step is to start at the same time. This makes it easy to see if proper work assignments have been made with regards to daily maintenance. And if they're not... adjustments can be made.

## Key Terms

- Sweep: To clean in such a way as to identify and remove the sources of contamination.