

## The 5S Improvement Method

5S is a Lean tool that can be used anytime, anyplace. It's the foundation for continuous improvement, zero defects, cost reduction, and a safe work area. In order to produce high quality, you have to maintain standards and eliminate the things that interfere. The 5S method enables increased quality, waste identification, standard process, visual control, and promotes employee satisfaction.

The intent of 5S is to have only what you need available in the workplace, a designated place for everything, a standard way of doing things, and the discipline to maintain it. Created in Japan, the components of 5S are *seiri*, *seiton*, *seiso*, *seiketsu*, and *shitsuke*. Translated into English:

- **Sort:** Remove all items from the workplace that are not needed for current production.
- **Set in Order (or Straighten):** Arrange needed items so they are easy to find and put away. Put commonly used items closer to the employee's workspace.
- **Shine:** Make sure everything is clean, functioning, and ready to go.
- **Standardize:** This is the method you use to maintain the first three S's.
- **Sustain:** Make a habit of properly maintaining correct procedures.

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### Step 1 – Sort

- Survey the work area and red tag things that are broken or unused.
- Remove all trash.
- Move out the unnecessary items to a red tag (holding) area.
- *When in doubt, move it out.*

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### Step 2 – Set in order for ease of use

- Define item placement by frequency of use. Ask: What do I need to do my work? How many do I need? Where should I put it?
- Label as appropriate.
- Note minimum and maximum quantity (if appropriate).
- *A place for everything and everything in its place.*

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### Step 3 – Shine

- Identify cleaning activities and routine maintenance required.
- Develop standard operations and work standards.
- Implement a daily 5S checklist.
- *A clean workplace enhances quality, safety, and pride.*

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### Step 4 – Standardize

- Conduct frequent 5S audits to uncover 5S abnormalities.
- Determine root cause(s) of any 5S abnormalities.
- Implement countermeasures for abnormality prevention.
- Do it daily.

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### Step 5 – Sustain

- As a team, develop daily (or weekly) 5S checklist.
  - Make sure a score sheet and performance board are visible to all.
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