**5-S** is a technique to organize and sustain an environment in which everything has a place, is in its place and is ready for use. The use of 5S can:

- Improve organization of the workplace,

- Reduce inefficiencies associated with search for supplies, tools, records and information, and

- Increase morale, safety and quality.

The five characteristics of a **5-S** are: **Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardize, and Sustain**.
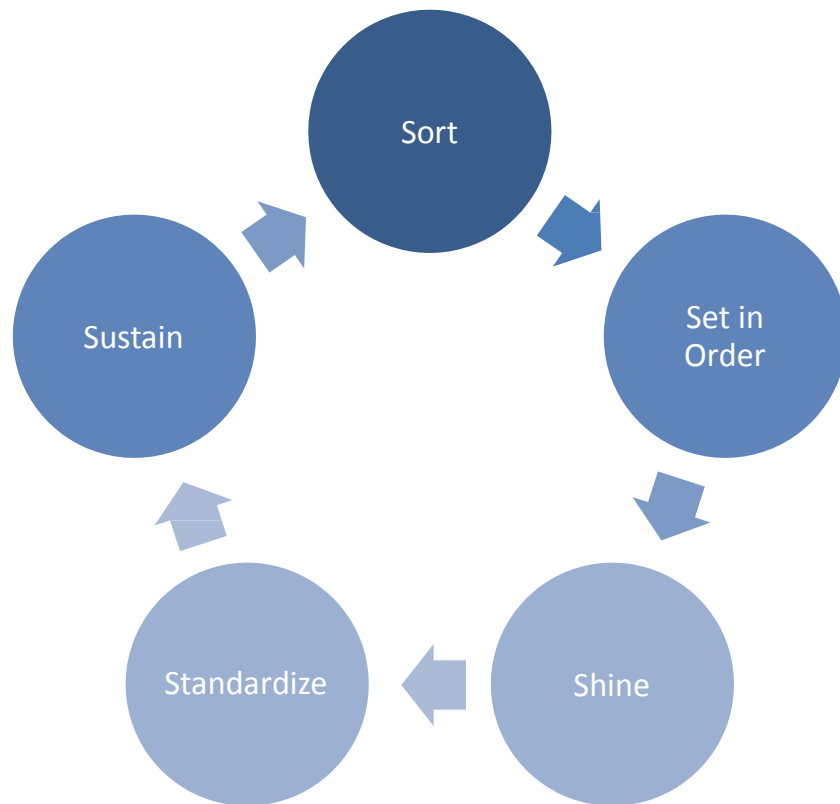
5-S is a great introduction to process improvement techniques. The **5-S** process creates and maintains an organized, clean, safe, and efficient setting that enables the highest level of value-added performance. This means eliminating search, travel, transporting materials, inventory, and hazards. It achieves its ends by introducing organization and orderliness, eliminating unneeded materials, and establishing self-discipline.

Sort:

- Define what is necessary and unnecessary
- Remove things not required for the process (unnecessary)
- Add things that are missing (necessary)
- Discard and recycle junk
- '**Red Tag**' items
    - Possibly needed
    - Might be helpful to others

Set in Order:

- Determine location for all items
    - Centrally locate shared items so they are convenient for all who use them
    - Organize everything so it is convenient to complete the work
    - Standardize workstations where similar work is done
- Calculate the needed quantities of each item
- Place items in storage locations
- Label storage locations

Shine:

- Clean all work surfaces, including under & behind all equipment
- Label and outline all locations
- Assign responsibilities and create schedules to maintain
- Sustain a visually productive workplace

Standardize:

- Maintain adherence to the first three S's as part of daily work
    - Policies and training
    - Visual controls, Checklists and Layouts
- Assign owner to each of task sheet
- Develop 5-S scoring method

Sustain:

- Schedule monthly management audits to score 5-S by area and display results
- Schedule 5-S activities in all areas
- Schedule annual repeat of 5-S activities to show continuous improvement

5-S Tips:

- 5-S areas should be small in scope (workstation or copy room vs. dept.)
  - More small 5-S activities are better than one large activity
  - Have enough time available for a thorough sort
  - Do some pre-work (Create 5-S worksheets, etc.)
- Size team to match the area
- Include people on team from outside the area
  - They will ask "Why do you have the space set up this way?"
- No need for perfection on first 5-S pass – plan on multiple passes
- Don't clean up the area before the 5-S – show "as is" state and celebrate the improvements
- Email and/or display before and after pictures
- Document any savings that result
- Make sure to have management involvement/support in order to sustain