

Topic: Office Safety

12 Habits of a Safe Office Worker

When people talk about the importance of workplace safety, what often comes to mind are jobs in construction, forestry or manufacturing, where workers are faced with the risks of falling from heights or being entangled in machinery. The safety of an office worker is not usually given a second thought.

Yet, according to the Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada, every year the clerical occupation accounts for thousands of accepted time-loss injuries. And according to the National Safety Council, employees are 2.5 times more likely to experience a disabling fall in an office setting than anywhere else. The office is not as safe as it seems.

In fact, the office can be the site of many occupational hazards, including:

- Repetitive stress,
- Slips, trips and falls,
- Electrical hazards,
- Fire hazards,
- Workplace bullying, and
- Stress.

How to Stay Safe in the Office

Fortunately, your risk of being injured in an office can be significantly reduced by developing some good safety habits. Here are just a dozen of the many ways you can reduce your risks of injury at the office:

1. **Clear the floor.** Ensure your walkway is free of loose materials and debris, and report to maintenance (or clean up yourself, if appropriate) any slippery or wet floors or worn carpeting.
2. **Clear the stairs.** Keep all stairwells clear of obstructions.
3. **Inspect your chair.** Report to your supervisor any worn or damaged chairs.
4. **Adjust your space.** Talk to your supervisor about any ergonomic adjustments required in your workstation, such as height-adjustable chairs or monitors, improved lighting, headsets, etc..
5. **Use the right equipment.** If you need to reach something overhead, use a stepladder, not a chair, which can slip out from beneath you.
6. **Close drawers.** Reduce the risk of tripping and close cabinet drawers as soon as you are finished with them.
7. **Lift properly.** Use proper lifting techniques whenever you need to lift a stack or files or computer paper. These techniques include lifting with your legs, keeping your back in a straight position and holding the load close to your body.
8. **Store wisely.** Reduce the risk of being struck by falling objects and store large stacks of files and other heavy items close to the floor and not up on higher shelving. Be careful not to exceed the load capacity of shelving.

TOOLBOX TALKS



9. **Inspect cords.** Damaged and/or ungrounded power cords not only violate safety codes, they pose a serious fire hazard. Notify your supervisor if you spot any cords that are frayed or have exposed wire.
10. **Be prepared.** Learn and understand the company's emergency procedures for fire, hostile person and evacuation.
11. **Know your way out.** Familiarize yourself with the emergency exit routes and ensure these exits remain unblocked and accessible.
12. **Protect yourself.** Do not minimize the effects of workplace stress. Learn and understand your company's policies on bullying, harassment and work pressure, and the procedures for reporting any of these incidents.

Conclusion

It's easy to be complacent about safety when you work in an environment that is as comfortable as the modern office. Yet injuries still occur. Protect yourself by developing some safety habits today.

Quiz:

1. Damaged and/or ungrounded power cords are a _____ hazard.
2. Why is it not safe to stand on a chair to reach something overhead?
3. Cabinet drawers should be _____ as soon as they are no longer being used.
4. Wet floors or damaged carpeting should be _____ right away.
5. Large stacks of files should be stored up high and out of the way.

True or False

Answers:

- 1 Fire, 2 Chairs can slip out beneath you, 3 closed, 4 cleaned up or reported to maintenance, 5 False.