

## OFFICE SAFETY

How do I keep the office safe?

1. Reduce the risk of a slip or trip by keeping your work area clean. Clean up spills as soon as they happen. The carpet must be properly fitted and intact. Use non-skid floor mats.
2. Electrical cords used for projectors, or other equipment, must be placed in a cord guard before laying the cord on the floor in an open area. Use power strips with built in circuit breakers to avoid tangled extension cords and overloaded outlets. All outlets must be grounded.
3. Coffee pots, microwaves, or other appliances used in the workplace need to carry an Underwriters Laboratory (UL) or other appropriate listing for electrical safety. Appliances must be maintained in good working order.
4. Keep desk drawers, filing cabinets, and lockers closed except when in use. Open one drawer at a time and close it gently, using the handle. Do not try to force open a stuck drawer. Fill empty cabinets and storage racks from the bottom up to prevent tipping.
5. Arrange contents of filing cabinets and storage racks so they will not be top heavy. Store frequently handled or heavy objects between mid-thigh and shoulder height. Do not use the top for storage.
6. Secure filing cabinets and storage racks that are three or more times taller than they are deep to the floor, wall, or ceiling. For example, bolt a storage rack to the wall if it is eight feet tall but only two feet deep. As an alternative you can bolt storage racks back-to-back.
7. Store sharp and pointed objects safely and do not reach for them without looking. Use paper cutters safely. Keep fingers away from blades and only cut a small stack of paper at a time.
8. Before placing equipment on a desk or table, make sure it is stable and can support the weight of the equipment.
9. Disconnect power to a business machine, such as a typewriter, before attempting to service or adjust it. Observe all warning labels on office machines.

How do I manage my work and time for safety?

1. Hurrying to make a deadline and taking short cuts can lead to accidents. Get organized before you act. Spending a little time in planning and preparation saves time and accidents later on.
2. Take responsibility for safety. Stop when you see a hazard and eliminate it on the spot. Report hazards that you can not easily fix to your supervisor. Do not wait for someone else to make the workplace safe.
3. Use the right tool for the job and use whatever safeguards you can. A finger guard protects against paper cuts. A moistener prevents cuts to the mouth or tongue while licking stamps or envelopes.
4. Know where emergency equipment is stored. Know what to do in case of fire, medical, or other emergencies. Keep telephone numbers for police and fire departments handy. Know where fire alarms and fire extinguishers are, and know how to use them.
5. In case of fire, leave as quickly as possible. Know where your emergency exits are. Always plan your primary and secondary escape routes.
6. Use a step or ladder (never a desk, chair, or box) to reach overhead objects, and move close to what you need rather than stretching for it. When standing more than six inches off the floor for any reason (i.e. filing or getting something down), it is recommended that you remove rings. If you should slip, rings can catch on drawers or the edges of furniture causing potentially severe injury to your fingers or hand.

How can I avoid aches and pains in the office?

1. Use good lifting techniques. When possible, modify the work areas so routine lifting from high or low levels is not necessary. For example, provide a table for waist-high delivery/pickup of parcels and mail.
2. Plan your moves and path of travel when you are going to move something. Clear obstacles away before you begin. Get close to the object you are lifting, squat down to it, and bring the load against your body. Do not twist or “jerk” when lifting. Lift with your legs, maintaining the three natural curves of your spine. Turn corners and change direction by moving your feet, not turning at the waist. Avoid carrying loads that block your view and take care when rounding corners. Get help when lifting heavier objects, such as computer monitor or box of paper, and use a dolly or other mechanical aid to move it.
3. Sit with good posture, face your work directly, and arrange your work area so the most frequently used items are within easy reach. Relax your hands occasionally by dangling them loosely from your wrists and shaking them. Force a yawn to relax tight facial muscles.
4. Look away from paperwork or your monitor periodically to reduce eyestrain. Relax your eyes by re-focusing them for 15 seconds on a point at least 20 feet away (try the upper corner of a room) and then closing them for 15 seconds.
5. Position your monitor and document holder at eye level and about an arm’s length away.
6. Move around, vary your work activities, and take frequent micro-breaks during your shift.

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Date

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## OFFICE SAFETY INSPECTION CHECKLIST

Office safety inspections generally uncover potential hazards that could cause injuries and/or fires. The following list could be used as a guide to making an inspection in your office area.

If there are other hazards not found on this list, you might jot them down to remind the person and/or persons making the inspection of the possible hazard.

1. Are the floors always clean of litter and/or spilled liquid?
2. Are floor surfaces chipped and uneven: does carpeting show worn spots or holes?
3. Are aisles and walkways free of boxes, wastebaskets, chairs, and other obstacles that impede traffic?
4. Are electric and telephone cords placed where they might trip others?
5. Do electrical cords look frayed? Are they draped over hot pipes, bent around hooks or sharp edges, or are they stepped on?
6. Are poorly made or flimsy extension cords in use?
7. Are all appliances connected with three-pronged plugs?
8. Are electric outlet boxes or bonnets on the floor exposed so that they pose a tripping hazard?
9. Are employees allowed to stand on chairs, desks, boxes, drawers, or other improvised ladders?
10. Is the paper cutter placed in a safe location where there is enough safe room to work?
11. Are employees still using spike files or pencil holders with pencil points up?
12. Is the machinery turned off when not in use? Do employees wear dangling jewelry or floppy clothing around moving machinery (rotating machines, shredders)?
13. Are razor blades or pins mixed in with paper clips?
14. Are employees allowed to lean way back in chairs, with feet up on the desk?
15. Do employees put tops on cups of coffee or other liquids while carrying them through the office (to avoid spills)?
16. Do employees run in the office?
17. Are scissors properly stored: do they have rounded points?
18. Are stair handrails, treads, and risers in good condition and stairs well lighted?
19. Are stairs free of litter, paper clips, scraps, and spills?
20. Are desk or file drawers left open?
21. Are files, lockers, cabinets, and bookcases bolted securely?
22. Is more than one file drawer usually opened at once?
23. Are files top-heavy, with empty drawers at the bottom and full drawers on top?
24. Are boxes, papers, and books stored on top of files, storage cabinets, or windowsills?
25. Are transparent glass doors marked so they can be seen?
26. Are floors painted or marked under the swing of solid doors to indicate the striking radius?
27. Must employees step up or down while going through a doorway? If so, is a warning sign posted and steps painted a caution color?
28. Do self-closing doors have too much spring tension?
29. Are fire exits clearly marked and free of obstructions?
30. Are fire extinguishers locations marked (usually at ceiling height on the wall) so they are visible from a distance?
31. Have fire extinguishers been inspected recently?
32. Are both A and B-C extinguishers readily available where necessary?
33. Do all employees know the location of exits, alarms, and extinguishers?
34. Are nonflammable fluids used whenever possible?
35. Are flammable fluids properly stored in safety cans and approved safety cabinets?
36. Are emergency numbers posted for police, fire department, and ambulance?

37. Are fire drills conducted frequently, (semi-annually)?
38. Are combustibles stored near machinery or heat sources?
39. Are sprinklers, fire detectors, and hoses clean and in good working order?
40. Are doors to enclosed stairwells kept closed at all times?
41. Are all accidents promptly reported?
42. Are adequate first-aid supplies on hand?
43. Are company parking lots well lit and clearly marked and generally free of tripping hazards?
44. Are elevators properly maintained and periodically inspected according to government standards?
45. Is there a plan to assist people who may be trapped in an elevator? (including: how to safely remove them, whom to call, how to prevent panic?)
46. Are all elevator landings posted "Do not use elevator during an emergency or fire"?
47. Is smoking forbidden in elevators? Are elevators posted with "No Smoking" signs?

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