



Office Safety SWP 014

There is a common misconception that serious incidents are confined to field operations and activities. However, many serious incidents occur within the seemingly safe confines of the office. Most of these incidents involve tripping, slipping, and falling, resulting in strains, sprains, and lacerations to the head, arms, hands, and legs.

The potential for exposure to electrocution, fire, violence, and motor vehicle accident are but some of the situations that the office worker may have to contend with.

The following are some basic guidelines and precautions that workers should take to help make the respective offices a safer workplace for those who staff the office and visitors to the office.

Filing and Storage Cabinets

- Do not overload the top shelves or drawers.
- Open drawers one at a time and close them after use to avoid overbalancing the cabinet.
- Use handles for opening and closing the drawers to avoid pinched and broken fingers.
- Place heavier files or materials on the bottom shelf or drawer.
- Do not pile material on top of shelves in such a way as to impact upon lighting, ventilation, and/or fire suppressant systems.

Sharps

- Do not dispose of glass or other sharp objects in a wastepaper basket or bin.
- Always close the blade after using a paper cutter.
- Ensure scissors or other cutting devices are suitably stored and secured.
- Be careful when using a paper shredder to avoid catching jewelry, ties, clothing or long hair in the blades.
- Do not use light tables or other glazed surfaces as stepping stools or ladders.



Electrical Outlets/Cords

- Ensure all electrical and extension cords are in good condition and that they do not become overloaded.
- Do not overload electrical plug outlets.
- Do not run electrical or telephone cords across aisles or walkways where they may become damaged or present a slipping or tripping hazard.
- Remove extension cords from the electrical outlet by pulling on the plug only; never pull on the cord.
- Do not overload electrical plug outlets.
- Ensure suitable grounding is provided on all extension cords and appliances.

Floors and Aisles

- Keep aisles clear of spills, debris, and storage boxes.
- Use handrails when climbing or descending stairways.
- Do not obstruct your view by carrying oversized loads.
- Ensure exit signs are suitably located and illuminated.
- Ensure access and egress doors and hardware are serviceable.
- Ensure emergency lighting is suitably located, serviced and in operational condition.
- Correct any unsafe conditions and report them to a supervisor.

Fire Precautions and Safety

- Learn the location of fire extinguishers in your area.
- Familiarize yourself with the escape routes from your place of work.
- Ensure staff members are aware Emergency Response Plan requirements, especially those members who may have designated responsibilities within the plan.
- Conduct regularly scheduled fire and emergency evacuation drills.
- Never try to take an elevator to escape from a fire; always use the stairs.
- Caution should be demonstrated when using office-type flammable cleaning fluids.
- Keep flammable materials in approved capped and labelled containers.



References:

- British Columbia Occupational Health and Safety Regulation Part 4: General Conditions Sections 4.32 – 4.45..