

EMPLOYEE SAFETY



When you think of workplace hazards, you might think of a worker in a manufacturing plant surrounded by large machines and heavy equipment, and all of their associated hazards. It is often thought that workplace hazards automatically disappear at the office door. Unfortunately, this is not true. It is not unusual to hear of an office employee tripping over a computer cord or straining his/her back while moving a piece of office furniture.

An office setting has its share of safety hazards. What can be done? This brochure will provide details on how to be safe in an office setting.



Clutter in the workplace often creates more than an eyesore; it can get in the way of safety. Stacks of paper, boxes, trash and other items that collect through out the work area can be fire hazards and can even block safe exits.

OFFICE MACHINES WITH MOVING PARTS

- » Office machines should be guarded to prevent accidental contact with moving parts.
- » Guards should not be removed from a hand operated paper cutter.
- » When the cutter is not in use, the blade should be secured in the down position.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

Accidents and injuries that occur in an office environment typically are associated with the following types of workplace situations:

- » Slipping, tripping and falling.
- » Improper lifting and handling of equipment, materials, supplies, objects, etc.
- » Being unobservant, inattentive or unaware of surroundings.
- » Caught on, in or between stationary or moving objects.
- » Struck by or struck against an object.
- » Improper layout or arrangement of furniture, equipment, materials and supplies.



SAFETY FIRST

PROPER LIFTING AND HANDLING OF OBJECTS

- » Lift with the legs, not the back.
- » Do not twist the back while lifting or holding a load. Turn the body by moving the feet.
- » Hold the load as close as possible to the body.
- » Use a mechanical lifting device, if possible.
- » Do not attempt to lift a load beyond one's capability to lift it safely. Get help when necessary.
- » Before lifting objects, observe them closely for sharp staples, strapping, bonding and/or rough edges that could puncture the hand or body.
- » Use gloves when necessary to protect hands.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Electrical equipment used in an office is potentially hazardous and can cause serious shock and burn injuries if improperly used or maintained.

- » Most fixed office equipment must be grounded. Never remove the third (grounding) prong.
- » Avoid overloading outlets and strip plugs.
- » Inspect electrical cords regularly for fraying and exposed wiring. Notify your supervisor so that damaged cords can be replaced.

WASTE BASKET / CONTAINERS AND OTHER OBSTACLES

- » Wastebaskets and other obstacles that create tripping hazards should not be placed or left in walkways.
- » Aisle width should conform to the NFPA Life Safety Code 101 and should be kept free of obstacles that cause trip, slip, and fall type accidents. File drawers should not open into aisles.
- » Hazardous chemicals, materials or objects should not be placed in file cabinets.
- » File cabinets that are not weighted at the bottom should be secured to the wall or bolted together to prevent toppling when top drawers are opened.
- » Heavy materials should not be stored/placed on top of files cabinets.

BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

- » Microorganisms may be present in blood and body fluids that are able to cause diseases in humans.
- » If blood or other body fluids are present in your work area, notify your supervisor for proper cleanup. Unless you have been trained in proper safe cleanup, it is not your job.

CHAIRS / LADDERS

- » Chairs should be inspected frequently to insure they are safe. Hazards should be reported to the supervisor for correction.
- » Chairs should be maintained in safe condition.

» Employees should not lean too far back in chairs that are not equipped to swivel.

» Chairs should not be used as ladders.

» Employees should exercise care before sitting in a chair to ensure it is properly placed. Rolling chairs may cause accidents.

» When necessary to reach above extended arm height, approved ladders or step stools should be provided and used.

» Employees should not use makeshift devices such as a box, desktop, chair, table, etc., as a substitute for an approved ladder or step stool.

» Do not stand on top of the ladder.



STAIRWAYS

- » Stairways should be kept clear of obstructions that cause tripping and falling accidents.
- » Do not run up or down steps, and use handrails when ascending or descending.
- » When ascending or descending stairs, loads that obstruct vision should not be carried.
- » Fire exit doors from stairways should not be locked to prevent employees from exiting.

EXITS



- » Exit doors and the way to exit doors should be clearly identified, kept free of objects that block egress, and not locked from the inside.
- » Plan for fire or bomb evacuations. Leave the building when the fire alarm goes off and meet in a designated location for an accurate head count. Do not go back into the building until the police or fire department gives the all clear.
- » Know the locations of two exits in case one is blocked

9-1-1

Dial 9-1-1 to report an accident, fire, serious injury, or crime in progress that requires immediate response.

For non-emergencies, call the administrative telephone number for the campus police department.

IF YOU FEEL YOU HAVE BEEN DIRECTED TO PERFORM UNSAFE WORK

If you feel you have been directed to perform work that is unsafe or dangerous beyond the normal hazards of your occupation—or you are asked to perform work without adequate training or protective equipment required by applicable laws—you may request that your supervisor have the work reviewed.

The Office of Environmental Health and Safety Management or other university-designated expert will make a determination about the safety of the work and the safety and health standards that apply. Prior to this determination, you are not required to perform the work in question, as long as you have informed your supervisor of the safety issue and can demonstrate that there is a reasonable basis for your belief that the work would endanger your personal health or safety.

INJURY ON-THE-JOB

1. Any work-related injury or illness must be immediately reported to the supervisor, whether or not medical treatment is needed. Failure to report the injury the same day of occurrence may result in denial of a claim by Worker's Compensation.
2. Supervisors must report an injury on the Occupational Injury-Illness Report form within 24 hours, regardless of whether the injury required professional medical attention or resulted in lost time. The form and submittal instructions are available on the Web at hr.iu.edu/workers. Call 812-855-4847 for assistance.
3. Staff should contact the campus Human Resources office for the specific procedure to follow when seeking medical treatment and for questions regarding Workers' Compensation.
4. Before leaving the treatment location, employees must obtain a physician's statement regarding the employee's return-to-work status and provide it to their supervisor.

IUS ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY
Room 129 Hausfeldt Building 812-941-2989