

OFFICE SAFETY TIPS

A COMPREHENSIVE RESOURCE



1.2 million working people suffer annually from a work-related illness. 175 workers are killed on the job. Don't be just another statistic, protect yourself with these office safety tips.

OFFICE ERGONOMICS & HEALTH

- ✔ **At your desk,**
 - Use good posture. Sit up straight, feet on the floor; if you're using a keyboard, keep your wrists straight.
 - Keep files, drawers, and cabinets clean, organized, and closed to prevent spilled material and tripping.
 - Store heavy supplies on lower drawers or at ground level, and secure items in cabinets that close securely.
 - Don't eat or drink at your computer, as crumbs or spills might cause serious malfunctions to the equipment.
 - Secure sharp objects (cutting knives, scissors, paper cutter blades) when not in use; never leave these misplaced and unattended.
- ✔ **Moving around,**
 - Walk, don't run.
 - Look where you're going; you'll have time to read later.
 - Watch for spills on the floor or other obstacles, and take the initiative to clean them or ensure that they're cleaned.
 - Ensure that exits are clear and easily accessible.
 - Opt for the elevator when carrying heavy loads.
 - Use the handrail on the stairs.
- ✔ **Obey and enforce the non-smoking rules.**
- ✔ **Uphold good housekeeping;** schedule regular office cleaning and set up caution signs during rainy or snowy days.
- ✔ **Provide effective, bright lighting,** for both the interior and exterior spaces (including stairwells, parking lots); use motion sensors to save energy and alert for intruders.
- ✔ **Ensure that there is a first-aid kit to treat potential injuries.** Invest on a [HR training](#) program for your employees and supervisors.
- ✔ **Live healthfully in the workplace:**
 - Stay hydrated.
 - Don't skip lunch; make sure you get your nutrients and minerals.
 - Limit machine fumes with ventilation or distance.
 - If your job is sedentary, be sure to take frequent breaks to walk around and stretch.
- ✔ **Know the diseases, allergies, or conditions of co-workers,** and learn how to help them in case of emergencies.
- ✔ **Share your own needs** and explain whatever assistance or medication you would need in case of an emergency.
- ✔ **Minimize headache and fatigue** by following these office safety tips:
 - Providing enough ventilation
 - Blocking exterior pollution (traffic pollution, etc.) and interior fumes (exhaust from printing machines, etc.)
 - Adjusting lighting (not too bright and not too dim)
 - Reducing glare (dull paint finishes, indirect lighting)
 - Muffling noise (carpeting, curtains, insulation, reduced volume for telephone ringers and beeping equipment)

Watch for Potential Danger

- ✔ Fix or report torn **carpeting, loose floorboards or tiles, or otherwise unstable surfaces.**
- ✔ Fix or report broken furniture, burnt-out light-bulbs or other appliances, and other **defective equipment.**
- ✔ Look out for **frayed, torn, or otherwise damaged** electrical cords, cables, etc.
 - Keep floors and walkways clear of cords; coil excess cables or use cable ties to keep them out of the way.
- ✔ **Remove obstructions** in walkways and (especially) exits.
 - Safety signs and exit signs should be clearly marked and easily seen.
- ✔ Never touch electrical switches, outlets, or plugs with **wet hands.**
- ✔ **Fix or report fire hazards;** check the sprinkler system, renew batteries for smoke detectors, have fire extinguishers on-hand.
 - Use flame-retardant materials.
 - Label and safely store all combustible items and fluids.

PREPARE FOR EMERGENCIES

- ✔ **Know the specific evacuation plans and guidelines**—especially for natural disasters or conditions (fires, earthquakes, floods, tornados, etc.) that are



DID YOU KNOW?

Poor Wrist Ergonomics Are Responsible for Most Office Injuries

Of the 92,576 injuries or illnesses due to repetitive motion including typing or key entry, 55% affected the wrist, 7% affected the shoulder, and 6% affected the back. ⁽³⁾

Poor Ergonomics Frequently Leads To Days Away From Work

For cases involving days away from work, BLS reports that in 1994 approximately 32% of the cases were the result of overexertion or repetitive motion. ⁽³⁾

More than 350,000 injuries are reported annually due to overexertion in lifting. ⁽³⁾



ACTION ITEMS

- ✔ Keep your workspace clean, organized, and free of obstacles.
- ✔ Be aware of all emergency exits and ensure easy access.
- ✔ Know the medical conditions, allergies, or needs of your co-workers, and understand what you can do to help in a time of need; ensure that they also know and understand your needs.
- ✔ Fix or report any hazards immediately.
- ✔ Know and practice emergency plans, especially for emergencies that are likely or probable according to your workspace and region.

typical or probable in your area.

✔ **Practice regular drills** for each type specific emergency.

✔ **Be familiar with all emergency exits and how to access them.**

✔ Ensure your office has **marshals, fire guards, or security personnel** for times of need.

✔ **Create strategies in case of more common and universal issues:** power outages, network failures, etc.

---- **Office Safety Tips: Sources** ----

- (1) [HIGH-RISE BUILDING FIRES](#), page v by [nfpa.org](#)
- (2) [HIGH-RISE BUILDING FIRES](#), page ii by [nfpa.org](#)
- (3) [Musculoskeletal Disorders and Workplace Factors](#), page xi by [cdc.gov](#)
- (4) [An Office Building Occupants Guide to Indoor Air Quality](#) by [epa.gov](#)
- (5) [Electricity Case: Statistical Analysis of Electric Power Outages](#), page 1 by [create.usc.edu](#)