

MSU - Dawg Tracks

September, 2017

MISSISSIPPI STATE
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION SERVICE

Work Safely in the
Office

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), in 2008, 80,410 private industry and administrative employees suffered on-the-job injuries. Many of these injuries could have been avoided if the supervisors and the employees had recognized the risk and taken a few safety measures to mitigate the potential for injury.

Slips, trips and falls are the most common type of office injury.

The same study revealed that 25,790 employees were sidelined with these injuries. The National Safety Council (NSC) states that office type employees are 2.5 times more likely to fall in an office-setting than anywhere else. Several different type of hazards contribute to these figures. By raising the awareness of these hazards the numbers could be greatly reduced. Remaining alert, focused, and thinking ahead would help to minimize these risks.

BASIC COMMON SENSE SAFETY TIPS-

- ✓ Sit upright in your chair with your feet on the floor. Before you sit down, look down to see that your chair is beneath you and hasn't rolled away.
- ✓ If you carrying a load, make sure your walkway is clear and you have clear vision to the destination. If the load is heavy, you might consider the elevator, especially if you are changing to another floor and if one is available.
- ✓ Walk-don't run! Be careful where you're walking and be careful on wet or slippery floors.
- ✓ Only open one file drawer at a time to avoid the potential of it tipping over-be sure to close it when you are through. Avoid stacking heavy items on top of the file cabinets. Place heavier items inside the lower drawers when possible.
- ✓ Make sure spills are cleaned up ASAP either by the one responsible or call a custodian.
- ✓ Keep the floors and aisles clear of electrical cords. Avoid extension cords, if at all possible, instead use power strips or surge protectors which are available in multiple lengths.
- ✓ A good policy in offices is rules against food and beverages at your work station or computer.
- ✓ Avoid touching outlets, switches, or plugs with wet hands.
- ✓ Always use the handrails when ascending or descending stairways.
- ✓ Don't attempt to read while walking.

REPORT PROBLEMS-

Anytime you see a potential problem or an item that could be unsafe or cause an injury report it to your supervisor. Following are some ideas that you might recognize and report:

- Torn carpet
- Broken or loose tiles
- Broken concrete from sidewalks or possibly broken steps entering the building.
- Burned-out light bulbs
- Broken desks or chairs
- Stray electrical cords in walkways or other obstructions
- Any defective equipment.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS-

Emergencies can and will happen and usually when you least expect them. It is imperative that you be prepared for them ahead of time.

- Develop an emergency plan to have, in case of a fire or other unplanned disaster.
- Once your plan is developed, review it with your fellow employees. A good idea is to review this plan annually or maybe even bi-annually.
- Make sure you and all the employees are totally familiar with the location of all exits.
- If you occupy multi-floor buildings, included in your plan, make sure that you assign a "floor monitor" for each floor. This person would be responsible to getting their floor cleared, again, in case of an emergency.
- As mentioned above, practice evacuations or fire drills at least once a year.
- In an emergency, make sure that the employees exit by the stairs. Do not use the elevator, especially during a fire.
- Stay away from windows during a tornado or other type of windstorm.
- If your location is close to an earthquake fault, you should prepare a specific plan remembering the following points:
~Teach: Drop-Cover-Hold On!
~Secure all critical supplies such as water, medications, and documents.

Communicate with your employees on all the aspects of natural disasters or other out of the ordinary circumstances.

OFFICE FIRE SAFETY TIPS-

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), between 2004 and 2008, local fire departments responded to 3,830 office fires. There were 4 deaths and 37 injuries annually.

With a few routine inspections the likelihood of a fire could be greatly reduced. Following are some general tips that will aid you in reducing this potential:

- **Maintain cords in good repair-** Check all your cords and replace the damaged or frayed ones. Extension cords are the most common cause of fires due to improper use or overloading. Extension cords are intended for temporary use and not as a permanent fix.
- **Inspect space heaters-** Space heaters should be UL approved & indicated on label. They need to be equipped with an automatic shut-off switch that cuts off when the heater is overturned. Unplug the heater at the end of the day and never leave a heater on that is unattended.
- **Keep clear access to your fire extinguishers.**
- **Keep all aisles and walkways open** - don't allow clutter to collect in the aisles and hallways.

Written by Ted Gordon Excerpts: <http://safetyandhealthmagazine.com>
4/17/2017 http://lovetoknow.com/Office_Safety_Tips

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