

INTRODUCTION

Every year, more than 400,000 people in offices are hurt badly enough that they miss work. Office dangers can be hidden and subtle, so you must be on guard all the time. The information in this Tailgate can help keep you safe in your office environment.

SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

Every year, nearly 500,000 workers are injured from slipping, tripping, or falling while on the job.

To prevent slips:

- Barricade wet areas
- Clean up spills immediately

To prevent trips:

- Eliminate or cover extension cords and cables
- Replace or repair loose carpets, rugs, and uneven flooring
- Keep walkways and work areas clean and free of clutter

To prevent falls:

- Use a step stool or ladder to reach above shoulder level
- Never use boxes, shelves, or chairs for climbing
- Always inspect ladders or step stools before use

ELECTRICAL HAZARDS

Electrical equipment should be inspected regularly and used properly.

- Permanent wiring maybe required if you need an extension cord for more than a short time
- Never overload outlets
- Report frayed cords, loose or broken wires, broken outlet covers and worn or broken plugs
- When possible, turn off electrical equipment when not in use
- Keep liquids away from electrical equipment
- Always unplug equipment by pulling the plug, not the cord

FIRES

To prevent fires:

- Never put hot items in office trash
- Keep flammable items away from heat sources, e.g., heaters and ovens

LIFTING

To lift properly:

- Make slow, even moves
- Stand close to the load, one foot slightly ahead of the other
- Keep both feet flat and bend knees slightly
- Flex hips to keep spine in neutral
- Keep the load close to your body
- Use your feet and legs to turn
- Don't twist your back
- Always, get help for heavy loads

WORKSTATION ERGONOMICS

Keyboard

- Position it so your arms hang comfortably and are close to your sides
- Bend your arms at your elbows at a comfortable angle
- Keep your hands in a straight line with your forearms, so you don't bend your wrist
- Use a document holder to help you sit in a neutral position

Monitor Screen

- The top of the screen should be just below eye level when you sit up straight
- Don't hunch over or tilt your head to avoid glare
- Close blinds or change lighting to reduce glare
- Your office area should be about as bright as your monitor screen

Chair

- Adjust to allow you to reach your work comfortably
- Seat height should keep your thighs parallel to the floor and your feet flat on the floor
- Adjust to support your lower back and keep its natural curve

SECURITY AND SAFETY

- Never enter an elevator or other secluded area with someone who looks out of place or is behaving strangely
- Report all suspicious activities and situations
- Report conditions that are safety hazards
- Park in well-lit areas
- Lock up your valuables or carry them with you

OTHER DANGERS

- Close file drawers and desk pull-outs
- Keep hair and loose clothing away from office machines
- Be careful with paper cutters and other sharp tools

CONCLUSION

Hidden dangers are in every office, but they can be controlled. Remember to be aware of your surroundings and develop safe work habits.