Hazards in the Office



WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Every year thousands of workers are injured on the job, and some are killed.

WHAT'S THE DANGER?

Broken bones and head injuries from falls, burns and electrical shock hurt just as badly when they occur in an office setting as when they happen at an industrial site.

EXAMPLE
The leading causes of office injuries are slipping, tripping and falling. Sound familiar? Falls are also a big cause of incidents in the plant and at any jobsite.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Here are some ways to prevent falls:

1. Keep the office free from clutter. Boxes should be stacked out of the way of traffic. Trash and spills should be cleaned up from the floor.
2. Re-route electrical cords away from traffic areas.
3. Remove from service any defective chairs.
4. Close drawers so nobody will trip over them.
5. Don't use makeshift climbing equipment such as boxes stacked on chairs. Use stepladders and stepstools correctly.

Fires:

- Make sure emergency numbers, first aid contacts and evacuation procedures for your office are posted where everyone can see them.
- Know where to find fire extinguishers and how to use them.
- Do not overload electrical circuits.

Chemical Hazards:

Know the chemicals that you work with or those that are used nearby. A tour of your office could reveal a surprising number of hazardous materials such as cleaning fluids, art supplies and solvents.

Safe Lifting:

Use materials handling equipment such as furniture carts to avoid lifting heavy objects.

Falling Objects:

- Filing cabinets can cause serious injury. Open just one drawer at a time. If you open more than that, you risk the cabinet falling over onto you. Load filing cabinet drawers evenly, starting with the bottom ones.
- Make sure shelves are securely anchored, and do not overload them. Do not place heavy objects on overhead shelves.

Personal Security:

Get familiar with your company’s antiviolence policies. Observe rules about lockup, escorts to parking areas, visitor badges and other security procedures.

Ergonomics:
Adjust your workstation so you can work comfortably and avoid strain to your neck, back, shoulders, wrists and other areas vulnerable to injury from repetitive work and static posture.

FINAL WORD

Just because you work in an office environment doesn’t mean you are immune to hazards. One mishap or error can lead to an injury that could result in a lot of grief.