



OFFICE SAFETY

You may think that since you work in an office you don't have to worry about being injured. However, offices can become dangerous because people don't anticipate the potential hazards.

Studies show that over a quarter of office injuries are caused by falls. One-third of the falls incurred by women are due to wearing high heels, which make falls more likely. Consider wearing lower, wider heels. Other things that can cause falls are spills on floors, torn carpets or exposed carpet seams, electrical cords running across the floor, open desk or file drawers, boxes or supplies stored in aisles, or waste baskets placed where you could trip over them. Look around to see if you can spot any of these potential problems. If you find any, take the time to get them fixed.

If your office has stairs, watch out! Falls on stairs cause more than 33,000 disabling work injuries in the US each year. About 2/3 of the workers falling on stairs were not using handrails when they fell. Many were carrying objects, or slipped on something left on the steps. Accidents on stairs are usually serious - 80% of these falls result in lost work days. Use handrails, pick up anything you see on the stairs, don't use stairs for storage, and don't try to carry things when using stairs if you can avoid it.

Use common sense with chairs, and don't use them for anything except sitting. Straight-back chairs aren't recliners - so don't lean way back, the chair could flip over. Chairs should never be used as replacements for stools or ladders.

Most offices seem to have an intersection that needs a traffic light to keep people from bumping into each other. If there are blind corners, consider installing convex mirrors so people can see each other coming. Be especially careful while carrying hot drinks. Don't carry stacks of material so high that your vision is obstructed. Carrying this much material not only blocks your vision, but could also strain your back.

Watch out for avalanches if you pile "stuff" on top of filing cabinets. Even a carefully stacked pile may start sliding due to vibration from opening and shutting file drawers. Also keep an eye out for overloaded upper file drawers. This may cause the entire filing cabinet to tip over on top of you when you open the drawer. Redistribute some of the weight to the lower drawers to reduce this chance, and check to make sure the filing cabinet is bolted to the adjacent cabinet, if it can be done.

These are just a few tips that can make your office area safer. Look around, and you no doubt will spot other problems that can be easily fixed. When you see a hazard, don't assume it is someone else's responsibility. If you see something say something...If you don't do something about it, who will?



Texting/emailing/reading while walking:

Eyes taken away from path of travel and inattention to surroundings



MP3 players with headphones:

Noise-induced hearing loss and inattention to surroundings