

EHS-08 OFFICE SAFETY

1. Stay clutter-free

Boxes, files and various items piled in walkways can create a tripping hazard. Safely store items in their proper location to prevent buildup of clutter in walkways.

2. Step on up

Standing on chairs – particularly rolling office chairs – is a significant fall hazard. Workers who need to reach something at an elevated height should use a stepladder. Stepladders must be fully opened and placed on level, firm ground. Workers should never climb higher than the step indicated as the highest safe standing level.

3. Eyes on path

Workers can collide when one or both parties are not watching where they walk, due to reading, texting, or carrying something so large that it obstructs their line of sight.

4. Get a grip

Marble or tile can become very slippery – particularly when wet. Placing carpets down can be especially helpful at entranceways, where workers are likely to be coming in with shoes wet from rain or snow.

5. Shut the drawer

File cabinets with too many fully extended drawers could tip over if they are not secured. Open drawers on desks and file cabinets pose a tripping hazard, so be sure to always completely close drawers when not in use.

6. Safe stacking

Large stacks of materials and heavy equipment can cause injuries if they are knocked over. Store heavy objects close to the floor, and ensure that load capacity of shelves or storage units is never exceeded.

7. Maintain cords in good repair

Damaged and ungrounded power cords pose a fire hazard and violate safety codes.

- a. Cords should be inspected regularly for wear and taken out of service if they are frayed or have exposed wire.
- b. Cords should never be used if the third prong has been damaged or removed.
- c. Make sure cords are not overloading outlets. The most common causes of fires started by extension cords are improper use and overloading.
- d. In addition to posing an electrical hazard, stretching cords across walkways or under rugs creates a tripping hazard, so ensure all cords are properly secured and covered.
- e. Extension cords should be approved by a certifying laboratory such as Underwriters Laboratories, and only used temporarily to connect one device at a time.

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8. Inspect space heaters

Verify the devices are approved for commercial use and have a switch that automatically shuts off the heater if the heater is tipped over. Make sure space heaters are not powered through an extension cord or placed near combustible materials such as paper. Turn off when leaving for the day or an extended period.

9. Never block fire sprinklers

Furniture and tall stacks of materials can block the range of fire sprinklers, reducing their effectiveness in the event of an emergency. Objects should never be placed higher than 18 inches below sprinkler heads to allow a full range of coverage.

10. Do not block escape routes or prop open fire doors

Items never should be stored along an emergency exit route. These paths should remain free of clutter. Fire doors should not be held open by unapproved means (such as with a garbage can or chair), as this creates a significant fire hazard.