Office Safety Meeting Kit



Most of the efforts to make a company safer are put into what is considered high hazard work. For example in a construction setting, the majority of energy is almost always focused towards keeping the workers in the field safe. While it is very important to address the hazards and safety in the field, there is still a need for a safety for those workers in offices in the company. There are tens of thousands of injuries sustained by office workers every year according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This number is significant and safety in the office should be taken seriously.

FIVE OF THE COMMON OFFICE HAZARDS:

Slips, Trips and Falls: Universal slip, trip and fall culprits include unattended spills, wet floors, exposed cords, unstable work surfaces, uneven floors, loose rugs and cluttered areas.

Ergonomic Injuries: Office workers spend many hours a day seated at a desk, working on a computer, resulting in ergonomic strains and other injuries related to posture and repetitive movement.

Eye Strain: Spending a large portion of your workday at the computer can cause eyestrain, according to the Mayo Clinic. Eyes may become dry and irritated, and workers may begin having trouble focusing. Light levels should be suitable for the work task—for instance, manual detail work may require higher levels of lighting, but staring at a computer monitor does not, the NSC said.

Fire Safety: According to the latest available data, fire departments responded to approximately 17,500 office fires in 2012, which resulted in $643 million in property damage, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

Indoor Air Quality: The prevalence of poor indoor air quality has contributed to a rise in occupational asthma and other respiratory disorders, chemical sensitivity and allergies, according to the NSC. Some of the reasons for poor air quality are inadequate ventilation systems; office overcrowding; the presence of cleaning chemicals and pesticides; water damage and mold growth; cubicle design that blocks off air flow to work areas; too much or too little humidity; and poor housekeeping, which leads to dirty work environments.

EVALUATE THE OFFICE FOR HAZARDS

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.

TOP SEVEN SAFETY TIPS FOR OFFICE WORKERS TO PREVENT WORKPLACE INJURIES

1. **Make sure your desk setup is ergonomic**

To maintain a neutral posture, your head should be centered over your neck and shoulders, wrists flat and elbows resting comfortably at your side. If your feet won’t touch the ground unless you lean forward, use a footrest.

2. **Take regular breaks to get up and move around.**

Sitting all day puts office workers at risk for numerous health problems. Warm up and stretching gives you easy exercises you can do at work.

3. **When it’s slippery due to ice and snow, walk like a penguin** when entering and leaving your office.

Winter slips and falls in parking lots are extremely common. To avoid them, walk like a penguin by walking flat footed taking short, slow steps. It’s also important to wear sensible footwear and carry only what you can handle.

4. **Use a headset for prolonged or frequent phone use**

Cradling the phone between your shoulder and ear can cause neck and back pain.

5. **Keep your workplace tidy**

Clean up spills immediately, keep aisles free of clutter, and tie up or secure cords so they don’t pose a trip hazard.

6. **Don’t let electrical cords create a fire risk**

Avoid running electrical cords under carpet or through windows and doorways. Also, don’t fasten them with unapproved devices, such as staples.

7. **Know your office emergency procedures**

Make sure you know what to do in the event of a fire, storm, violent intruder, medical problem or other emergency.

FINAL WORD

Because of the general perception that construction or oilrig work is much more dangerous than office environment work, much more education is needed to dispel that perception. Along with fractures, dislocations, strains, sprains and contusions, in recent years illness has increased among the office worker population.