



November 2010 Ohio Community Corrections Association Safety Report



Why Bother With Office Safety, Aren't All Offices Safe?



The risk of injury to office workers is much lower than to industrial workers. Because of this, office risks often go unrecognized, yet they could lead to serious personal injury or an office disaster. The attitude that office accidents do not amount to much is one of the prime causes of office accidents. The average office worker gives little thought to safety because office work is not perceived as hazardous, and no accidents have occurred in years. But, office accidents do happen. According to the Ohio BWC in the manual classification 8810 (Clerical Office Employees) the lost time average medical paid is \$17,701 and the lost-time average indemnity paid is \$13,277.

Offices can be safe! But only if you make safety your business. Every worker must be willing to adopt safe work procedures. Office supervisors must understand the nature of office hazards and unsafe practices and take measures to reduce or eliminate these hazards.

TYPES OF ACCIDENTS COMMON TO OFFICE WORKERS

Falls are by far the most common and account for 34% of office accidents. Strains follow, making up approximately 22% of office accidents. Struck by or striking against make up 18%, while caught in or between objects make up 10%.

Accidents that commonly occur in an office setting can be reduced or eliminated by paying attention to:

FLOOR SURFACES - Watch out for recently waxed floors, also loose carpeting, floorboards and tiles.

WET FLOORS

- Wipe up spills immediately.
- Wear appropriate shoes.
- Pickup pencils, paper clips and other objects that may cause a slip.

CHAIRS

- Keep all four legs of your chair on the floor. Tilting back in a chair often results in over balancing and a fall.
- Routinely inspect chairs that tilt for broken springs, loose screws and defective welds.
- Be sure-footed when climbing – do not use chairs for climbing, use a stepladder and climb cautiously.

CORDS

- Beware of telephone and electrical cords lying across the floor. Catching your shoes on a cord frequently results in a fall.
- Offer suggestions for different furniture layouts that might resolve the problems where cords are potential hazards.

STAIRWAYS AND WALKWAYS

- On stairways, use handrails and report worn treads and broken or loose stairs to the supervisor.
- Avoid obstructing your vision with large loads.
- Don't store boxes, supplies, etc., where people might trip.

LIGHTING

- Use as much light as you need to get the job done safely and correctly.
- Report dusty or out-of-order lights promptly.