

# 8

## **SAFETY IN THE OFFICE**

## OFFICE SAFETY

1. Report all unsafe conditions and equipment to your supervisor or safety representative.
2. Report all accidents, injuries and illnesses to your supervisor or safety coordinator immediately.
3. Exit doors and other means of egress are to be kept unblocked, well lighted and unlocked during work hours.
4. Should it become necessary to evacuate the building, proceed to the nearest escape route as diagramed in your department's Emergency Action Plan. **Refer to the Building Emergency Evacuation Plan.**
5. In the event of fire, sound the alarm, dial 911 and evacuate via the safest route. Upon hearing the fire alarm, stop work and proceed to the nearest clear exit.
6. Only trained workers may attempt to respond to a fire or other emergency.
7. Stairways should be kept clear of items that can be tripped over and all areas under stairways that are egress routes should not be used to store combustibles.
8. Materials and equipment will not be stored against doors or exits, fire ladders or fire extinguisher stations.
9. Fire extinguishers are to be mounted and made readily available for use during emergencies.
10. Aisles must be kept clear at all times.
11. Work areas should be maintained in a neat, orderly manner. Trash and refuse are to be thrown in proper waste containers.
12. All spilled materials shall be cleaned up promptly.
13. Chairs shall not be used in place of ladders or step stools.
14. Copying machines that use ammonia must be properly vented and the hazardous materials are to be properly labeled.
15. Files and supplies should be stored in such a manner as to preclude damage to the supplies or injury to personnel when they are moved. Heaviest items should be stored closest to the floor and lightweight items stored above.
16. All cords running into walk areas must be taped down or inserted through rubber protectors to preclude them from becoming tripping hazards.
17. Never stack material precariously on top of lockers, file cabinets or other high places.
18. Never leave lower desk or cabinet drawers open that present a tripping hazard. Use care when opening and closing drawers to avoid pinching fingers.
19. When working with a Video Display Terminal (VDT), the chair height must be adjusted so the floor supports the operator's feet.
20. VDT screens should be positioned directly in front of the operator and at a height where the center of the screen is slightly below the eyes of the operator.
21. The VDT screen must be maintained at a distance of 18" to 24" from the operator's face to reduce eyestrain.
22. VDT screens must be cleaned as needed.
23. The keyboard, in combination with the seating and the work surface, must be positioned so that the operator's forearms, wrists, and hands are parallel to the floor.
24. Do not open more than one upper drawer at a time; particularly the top two drawers on tall file cabinets.
25. Always use the proper lifting technique. Never attempt to lift or push an object which is too heavy. You must contact your supervisor when help is needed to move a heavy object.
26. When carrying material, caution should be exercised in watching for and avoiding obstructions, loose material, etc.
27. All electrical equipment should be plugged into appropriate wall receptacles or into an extension of only one cord of similar size and capacity. Three-pronged plugs should be used to ensure continuity of ground.
28. Individual heaters at work areas should be kept clear of combustible materials such as draperies or wastebaskets. Heaters should be equipped with tip-over switches.
29. Appliances such as coffee pots and microwaves should be kept in working order and inspected for signs of wear, heat or fraying of cords.
30. Fans used in work areas should be guarded. Guards must not allow fingers to be inserted through the mesh. Newer fans are equipped with proper guards.

31. Equipment such as scissors, staples, etc., should be used for their intended purposes only and should not be misused as hammers, pry bars, screwdrivers, etc. Misuse can cause damage to the equipment and possible injury to the user.
  32. When working with hazardous materials, personal protective equipment shall be worn in accordance with the manufacturers recommendation listed on the product's Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS).
  33. Cleaning supplies should be stored away from edible items on kitchen shelves.
  34. Cleaning solvents and flammable liquids should be stored in appropriate containers.
  35. Flammable liquids are not to be used for cleaning purposes.
  36. When hazardous materials can no longer be used for their intended purpose they must be disposed of in accordance with hazardous waste regulations.
  37. Solutions that may be poisonous or not intended for consumption should be kept in well labeled containers.
  38. Be aware of the potential hazards involving various chemicals stored or used in the workplace.
- (Refer to MSDS's in the Department's Hazard Communication Plan.)**
39. Obey all traffic laws when operating county vehicles.
  40. Buckle your seatbelt and adjust all mirrors before starting the vehicle.
  41. Employees must observe the Universal Precautions when exposed to human blood. It is required that employees assume all human blood and specified human body fluids are infectious for HIV, and HBV, and other bloodborne pathogens.
  42. Employees exposed to human blood and specified human body fluids, to the extent that is within their ability should ensure that exposure is minimized via use of proper protective equipment, work safe practices or effective engineering controls.

## **ERGONOMICS**

### **PREVENTION OF REPETITIVE STRESS INJURIES GUIDELINES FOR WORKSTATION COMFORT.**

#### **ADJUST YOUR CHAIR**

A comfortable chair, which supports your back and allows you to sit in a variety of positions throughout the day, is important for preventing muscle tension, stiffness, and backaches.

- Adjust the height of your chair's seat so that your thighs are horizontal, your feet rest flat on the floor, and your arms and hands are comfortably positioned at the keyboard.
- Use a footrest if your chair is too high for your feet to rest flat on the floor.
- Perform different tasks or change your position frequently throughout the day so that you do not remain seated in one position for too long.

#### **ADJUST YOUR VDT**

- Adjust the screen angle and position to minimize glare and reflections from overhead lights, windows, and other light sources.
- Adjust the display so that the top of the screen is about eye level when you're sitting at the keyboard.
- Adjust the keyboard height so that your forearms are parallel to the floor, with your upper arms hanging comfortably at your sides.
- Set the contrast or brightness of the screen at a level for easy viewing, and change it as the room light changes.
- To reduce reflections, consider using an anti-glare filter placed over the screen.

#### **ADJUST THE LIGHTING**

- Draw the drapes or adjust the blinds.
- Adjust your desk lamp or task light to avoid reflections on the screen.
- Reduce overhead lighting (where possible) by turning off lights or switching to lower wattage bulbs.

#### **ADJUST YOUR COPYHOLDER**

- Position your copy close to the screen and at the same level. Use an adjustable copyholder or raise the copyholder by placing it on a stable and safe surface.

- Position your desk lamp so that it illuminates source documents without causing glare on the screen.



<b>Workstation Self-Assessment Checklist</b>		
<b>Posture</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>
Is your head in an upright position when you view documents or your computer screen?		
Are your shoulders in a relaxed position when you place your hands on the keyboard?		
Are your arms close by your sides in a relaxed and comfortable position when you use the keyboard or input device (mouse, track ball, etc)?		
Are your elbows bent at a 90 - 120 degree angle when you use the keyboard or input device?		
<b>Keyboard/Pointing Device</b>		
Is the keyboard and/or keyboard and mouse tray adjustable so you can work in the neutral position?		
Is the keyboard designed so that no part of the keyboard tray bumps against your legs while you are working?		
Does your software (computer program) allow you to work without holding onto your input device for long periods of time (i.e. click and drag continuously while working)?		
<b>Chair</b>		
Is the height of your chair adjusted so that your feet are positioned flat on the floor or flat on a footrest?		
Are your hips as far back in the chair as possible so that your back is touching the chair back while using the keyboard?		
Is your lower back supported by the back of your chair?		
Is your chair relatively comfortable?		

<b>Workstation Self-Assessment Checklist</b>		
	Y	N
<b>Chair (Continued)</b>		
Do you know how to adjust your chair?		
Are the chair arms adjustable and at the correct height (puts arms at 90 - 120 degrees while working)?		
<b>Computer Screen</b>		
Is the top of the screen slightly below eye level (if you wear bifocals this does not apply)?		
Is your computer screen at a proper tilt and height to allow you to view it without raising or lowering your chin?		
Are you sitting directly in front of your computer screen such that the monitor, keyboard and chair are in straight alignment?		
If you read documents more than a computer screen, the documents should be in front of you.		
Is the computer screen at approximately an arm's length reach away from you (18 - 30 in)?		
Are your source documents positioned on a stand placed between the monitor and keyboard (this applies only to documents that you read from for more than 15 minutes)?		
<b>Lighting</b>		
Is there sufficient light for you to complete reading tasks without straining your eyes?		
Is your work station free from glare on the computer screen from windows, lights, and surfaces?		

<b>Workstation Self-Assessment Checklist</b>		
	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Work Techniques</b>		
Are your shoulders relaxed when keying and using the mouse?		
Do your hands float over the keyboard as you type without resting on the table or keyboard?		
Are fingers and wrists in a neutral or straight alignment when typing (not turning side to side or going up to down)?		
Are you hitting the keyboard keys with as light a force as possible when keying?		
Are you holding your mouse loosely with your hand and fingers in a relaxed position when moving the pointer around the screen?		
Are you avoiding awkward postures such as an extended finger or thumb when keying or using the pointer?		
Do you vary your tasks to take short "breaks" from keying or mousing to perform other functions such as answer the phone, using the copy machine, filing, etc?		
Do you take stretch breaks intermittently throughout the day?		
Is your phone and other desk accessories that you use most often within close reach (e.g. phone is located on or by your computer workstation and not behind you)		
Do you avoid cradling the telephone between your head and shoulder when talking or listening to others on the phone?		