



HARVARD

Campus Services

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, SAFETY &
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Date: 10/6/08

Toolbox Talk #15

OFFICE SAFETY

With this toolbox talk we will discuss how to keep a clean and safe office environment.

Storage:

A common problem found in offices is a lack of space. But a lack of space should not be used as an excuse to improperly store boxes, copier paper, etc.

- Storage of Office Materials:
 - Keep all storage of combustible materials (cardboard, paper) to an absolute minimum as they can pose both a fire and trip hazard.
 - Never store combustibles near electrical outlets.
 - Place heavier objects on lower shelves.
 - Ensure all shelves are sturdy and will be able to handle the load
 - Never block hallways, doors, and stairwells with stored office materials
 - There should always be clear access to electrical panels, fire extinguishers, AEDs, and fire pull stations.

Scheduled Cleaning:

- It is a good idea to schedule a few days a year to go through all your paper files and purge un-needed documents.
- Remove unnecessary objects/supplies/ books from shelving units.
 - Assess if you need more shelving space and order/install what is needed to eliminate floor storage.
- Take the time to clean and sanitize your workstation as needed.
 - Keyboards and telephones, in particular, should be cleaned and sanitized

Common Office Injuries:

- Slips, Trips and Falls are the most common cause of office injuries:
 - Slipping on wet/slick floors (Clean up any spills immediately)
 - Tripping over electrical cords/wires, open cabinet doors (Secure cords/drawers)
 - Damaged flooring (Report any loose tiles, frayed/torn carpeting etc. to Facilities)
 - Objects stored on the floor (Utilize shelf/desk space wherever possible)
 - Using a chair/box for a stepladder (Always use a stepladder)
- Struck By or Striking Objects:
 - Bumping into doors, open drawers etc.
 - Bumping into other people while walking
 - Struck by suddenly opened doors or falling objects
- Overexertion and Strains:
 - Picking up a load incorrectly (Refer to our Lifting Safety Toolbox Talk for additional information)
 - Repetitive Stress injuries resulting from your workstation (Refer to our Computer Ergonomics Toolbox Talk for additional information.)

Group Discussion Topics:

- Assess your workstation and correct all possible hazards.
- Is anyone in the office experiencing discomfort at their workstation? Contact EHSEM for an ergonomic evaluation of your workstation.
- Understand all evacuation routes from your office and where all the safety equipment is located (Fire Extinguishers, First Aid kits, AEDs, etc.)



Notify your facilities manager if there are



Open cabinet drawers present a trip hazard and a striking object hazard



Contact EHSEM if you experience discomfort at your workstation

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