OBJECTIVE

Recognize and eliminate potential hazards in office environments
INTRODUCTION

Office environments include many hazards and are the location for many accidents on the OSU campus each year.

Injuries in the office include:

- Ergonomic and repetitive motion injuries
- Back injuries from poor lifting and posture
- Slips, trips, and falls
- Allergies and indoor air quality illnesses
- Cuts, burns and crush injuries from office equipment and breakroom food prep
OFFICE SAFETY: BEST PRACTICES

• Good housekeeping is essential

• Never leave desk or cabinet drawers open

• Never use chairs or desks to reach an overhead item

• Use safe lifting practices. Bend your knees and lift with your legs

• Ensure your computer is in a position that will eliminate eye strain

• Always know your exit path in case of emergency
OFFICE ERGONOMICS

Design factors intended to maximize productivity by minimizing operator fatigue and discomfort

• Workstations should be designed to reduce excessive bending and stretching

• Office furniture should be fully adjustable to accommodate any employee

• Chairs should support the lower back and have an adjustable height

• Computer monitors should be placed directly in front of the user, with the top of the monitor at eye level to avoid neck strain

• Keyboards should be elevated in the back to keep wrists in a neutral position
Your Body at Work: Make Yourself Comfortable

Everyone’s ergonomic needs are different, if you experience any problems you should report these to your supervisor.

- Take a 5-minute stretch break every 1-2 hours.
- Draw shades to reduce glare.
- Elbows at right angles.
- Monitor perpendicular to window to reduce glare.
- Keyboard should be on slight negative tilt, about 1” above thighs.
- Mouse in plane or slightly above plane of keyboard. Avoid reaching for mouse.
- Knee angle at 90 degrees with feet in front of you.
- Feet flat on floor or on footrest.

Always stack heaviest things on middle shelves.

Carpeting or flooring should be free of rips and tears.

Sit straight up in chair to support pelvis and lower back.

Hip angle between 96-110 degrees as is comfortable.

Thighs approximately parallel to floor.

Do not sit with knees against chair. Have approximately 2”-3” between knee and chair.
AVOIDING EYE STRAIN

In an office setting, your eyes are at risk of becoming strained from looking at computer screens for a long period of time. Use these tips to help prevent future eye problems.

6 Tips To Relieve Eye Strain

1. Reposition terminal, try a glare filter, or modify lighting to reduce glare.

2. Blink your eyes often and take a break by alternating tasks when necessary.

3. Lean your elbows on your desk. Cup your hands and place them lightly over your closed eyes. Hold for a minute, while breathing deeply in and out. Slowly uncover your eyes.

4. Close your eyes and slowly roll your eyeballs clockwise all the way around counter-clockwise. Repeat 3 times.

5. Every half hour, look away from the computer screen. Focus on an object at least 20 feet away. Look back at the screen, then look away and focus again. Repeat 3 times.

6. Place reference materials as close as possible to the screen to avoid frequent head movements.
BACK SAFETY

- Avoid lifting if you can. Utilize hand trucks or rolling carts for heavy objects

- Keep heavy objects off the floor to reduce bending

- Test the weight of an object before lifting and enlist help if the object is too heavy

- Plan the lift prior to lifting. Determine where you are moving the object

- Bend at the knees and keep a straight back, carrying the load between the shoulder and waist
SLIPS, TRIPS, AND FALLS

**Prevention techniques:**

- Ensure electrical cords are out of areas of travel
- Clean any spills immediately, or mark with appropriate signage until the spill is cleaned
- Do not block passageways
- Keep office areas free of clutter
- **Watch where you walk.** Look for loose carpet, broken stair edges and other tripping hazards
- When using stairs, do not carry large loads that could obstruct your vision. Use handrails on stairs
- Report any potential safety hazards immediately to prevent other accidents
Preventing Slips, Trips & Falls

Know the Risks

Slips and trips are two of the most frequent causes of injury in the workplace and cost employers billions every year. However, the majority of accidents caused by slips and trips can be easily prevented.

By following the principles set out in this poster, you can ensure that your work environment is free from slip and trip hazards and that accidents do not occur.

Spillages
Clean spills up at once. Remember that the cleaning agent needed will depend on the nature of the spill. If the spill is oil-based, use a non-flammable solvent. Ensure that the area is kept clean to prevent accidents.

Cables
Try to make sure that cables do not cross walkways. Use cable conduits and tunnels to prevent trips and falls.

Obstructions
Permanent obstructions and any objects left lying around can easily create a trip hazard. If they are not removed, keep work areas clean of obstructions. If this is not possible, use appropriate signs or barriers to make people aware of the hazards.

Flooring
Look for any cracks, holes or uneven areas that may cause a trip hazard. If the floor regularly becomes wet or slippery, consider using non-slip floor mats and ensure that they are properly maintained.

Footwear
Choice of footwear is crucial in preventing slips and falls. Special footwear is needed to ensure the safety of employees. Employers must provide it.

Lighting
Lighting should be adequate enough to enable people to see obstructions and hazards. Ensure that faulty lights are repaired and dirty lights are cleaned before levels become too low for people to work in safety.

4. Hazard - Flooring

5. Hazard - Footwear

6. Hazard - Lighting

7. Preventing Accidents

An effective management system will enable you to:

1. Avoid any slip and fall problems.
2. Identify the best course of action.
3. Control your chosen course of action.
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of your procedures.
5. Be prepared for the following steps into your systems:
6. Ask what works for your work environment.
7. Keep records of all staff and job roles.
8. Communicate the need to other employees.
9. Ensure that work is kept up to a safe standard at all times.
10. Carry out regular checks to ensure that all safety procedures are being followed.
11. Ensure that a clean and tidy environment is maintained.
12. Follow the approach to safe and trip free areas as a regular basis and ensure accident reports.
OFFICE ENVIRONMENT

• Office layout should incorporate workflow, safety, health and convenience

• Offices should provide adequate room for employees to enter and exit, especially in the event of an emergency

• Sometimes illumination in your office can be inadequate or interfere with your vision, ensure this doesn’t happen by keeping illumination levels consistent and avoiding sources of glare

• Never run in office areas and keep to the right while walking in passageways

• Employees should remain clear of doors and stand away from the door swinging path
Noise in office settings is generally not hazardous but can be distracting and may interfere with your work. Here are some things to remember to help reduce noise:

- Keep noisy items away from areas that require a quiet atmosphere, such as answering the phone.
- Schedule noisy activities at times that will have less of an effect on other employees.
- Ensure all mechanical equipment is maintained to prevent any loose parts from making noise or squeaking.
- Refer to the chart to see if you may have any noise in your office that could be hazardous.

### Noise Levels & Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eardrum Perforation Possible</th>
<th>85dB Prolonged exposure to any noise at or above this level can cause hearing loss</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>160</td>
<td>110db Regular exposure of more than 1 minute risks permanent hearing loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Painful Acoustic Trauma</td>
<td>140 Tobacco, vacuum, motorcycle noise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painfully Loud</td>
<td>130 TV, football game, band concert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Loud</td>
<td>120 Rock concert, thunder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROTECT YOUR EARS</td>
<td>110 Car horn, snow blower, Pneumatic Hammer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Loud</td>
<td>100 Blow dryer, subway, helicopter, chainsaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loud</td>
<td>90 Motorcycle, lawn mower, convertible ride on highway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loud</td>
<td>80 Factory, noisy restaurant, vacuum, screaming child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>70 Car, alarm clock, city traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faint</td>
<td>60 Conversation, dishwasher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50 Moderate rainfall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40 Refrigerator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30 Whisper, library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20 Watch ticking</td>
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ELECTRICAL HAZARDS

- Do not overload sockets. Ask for additional outlets to be installed.
- If any cables become warm to the touch, this could indicate a fire hazard. Unplug and report the issue.
- Replace damaged or frayed electrical cords.
- Cables should never be placed under carpet or rugs or in walkways.
- Never use an extension cord in an area permanently. Extension cords are designed for temporary use.
- Never “daisy chain” extension cords. See picture for reference.
INDOOR AIR QUALITY

Indoor air quality is the study of pollutant levels within the office environment. Often, health symptoms associated with indoor air quality are vague and similar to symptoms that can occur from conditions at home. Usually, contaminant levels are far too low to require occupational evaluation. However, if you are concerned about the contaminant levels in your office, take a look at some of the factors that may require further investigation:

- Office plans changing to accommodate more employees
- Building renovations, such as installation of new carpet and painting
- Blocked air vents
- Water leaks/spills that could lead to mold growth
- Improper waste disposal
HOUSEKEEPING

• Good housekeeping is an important element in preventing accidents

• Poor housekeeping may lead to fires, injuries and poor health

• All aisles within the office should be clear and free of obstructions

• Damaged chairs, files, bookcases and desks must be replaced or repaired

• Materials stored within supply rooms must be neatly stacked and readily reached by adequate aisles. Never stack materials within 18 inches of fire sprinkler heads

• Never stack materials in aisles or passageways in a manner that could cause persons to trip or could hinder emergency evacuation
EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- In the event of an emergency, always follow your office procedures for evacuation
- Assist anybody who can’t help themselves
- Do not run to exits, walk and stay alert
- In the event of a fire, only attempt to use a fire extinguisher if you feel confident and the area of the fire is no larger than the size of a small trash can
IDENTIFY THE HAZARDS

1. ____________
2. ____________
3. ____________
4. ____________
5. ____________
6. ____________
7. ____________
8. ____________
9. ____________
10. ____________
11. ____________
12. ____________
IDENTIFY THE HAZARDS

1. Tripping hazard
2. Fall hazard
3. Clutter
4. Clutter
5. Open drawer
6. Exposed blade
7. Clutter
8. Eye strain
9. Electrical hazard
10. Clutter
11. Spill hazard
12. Non-ergonomic chair
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

• Fire Protection Engineering
• Life Safety and Emergency Preparedness
• Environmental Compliance
• Laboratory Safety
• Occupational Safety
• Occupational Health and Medical Surveillance
• Materials Management
• Industrial Hygiene
• Chemical Hygiene
• Safety Training
QUESTIONS?