Office Safety Awareness
What Can Go Wrong In An Office?

- **Issues**
  - absences
  - sickness
  - conflict

- **Injuries**
  - physical
  - psychological
  - illness & disease
Types of Hazards

- **Basic Hazard Categories**
  - Physical
  - Chemical
  - Biological
  - Ergonomic
  - Psychological
  - Behavioral

- **Risk Assessment**
Office Chemicals

- Cleaning Agents
- Toners & Developers
- Inks, Cleansers,
- Solvents
- Paints
Office Machinery

- **Electricity**
  - cords, cables & electrical hazards
- **Photocopiers**
  - toner, developer, noise, ozone, light,
- **Printers**
  - noise, inks, ozone (laser)
- **Computers**
  - eyestrain, posture
  - ergonomics, repetitive motion
- **Typewriters & older devices**
Office Ergonomics

- **Office Equipment**
  - workstations, chairs, keyboards
- **Placement of Equipment**
  - strains, sprains
  - Obsolete & out-of-service items
- **Posture**
  - height & distance of equipment
  - periods of sitting & standing
- **Breaks & Exercises**
  - 5-10 minutes per hour recommended
Employee Workstations

- Designed to reduce excessive bending & stretching.
- Should be fully adjustable.
- Good housekeeping is absolutely essential.
- Never store items under your desk, or on floors.
- Never store items on top of shelves & cabinets.
- Never leave desk and/or filing cabinet drawers open.
Office Furniture: Chairs & Desks

- Adjustable chairs are recommended.
- Good chairs have adjustable lower back support.
- Height adjustable - knees and hips should be level.
- Chairs on castors should have five (5) legs.
- If your desk is too high, compensate by raising the chair seat height, keeping feet flat on the floor.
- Never stand on an office chair to reach anything, especially if the chair has wheels or swivel.
• A badly positioned computer not only makes the user unproductive, it also causes discomfort.
• If the monitor is badly positioned the user will likely suffer eyestrain, headaches, stiff neck & shoulders, and backache.
• The monitor should be placed directly in front of the user to optimize a visual range of 300° in any direction.
• The screen should be 45-60 cm away from the user’s eyes.
• Adjust your computer and seating position for comfort — seek assistance from the Safety Office if necessary.
The top of the monitor should be at eye level to help reduce risk of neck and back strain.

The keyboard should be directly in front of the user.

The user’s elbows should be bent at a $90^\circ$ angle.

The keyboard should be angled to allow the user’s wrists to be in a neutral position.

The monitor screen should be positioned at right angles to the window to avoid glare.

Back-ups must be done regularly - per your IT administrator’s recommendations.
Stacking & Storage

• Light objects must be stored on top (high) and heavy objects in the bottom (low) - in filing cabinets, shelves, cabinets, and other displays.

• Boxes, files, and other heavy articles must not be stacked on top of cabinets, shelves, or window sills.

• Keep walkways clear, and fire fighting equipment unobstructed.

• Do not store unnecessary items in an office area.
Office Lighting & Illumination

• Adjust lighting to prevent eye strain.
• Eliminate glare and reflection.
• See your physician for a routine eye & vision examination

• Take a 5-minute break from computer work at least once an hour; look away from your monitor and focus the eyes on both near and far objects.
Electrical Safety

• Be aware of electrical hazards?
  – Injury: electrical shock & burns
  – Fire

• Reporting electrical problems & faults
  – Report all electrical problems & concerns to your supervisor, to the Building Proctor, and to Area Maintenance.
Electrical Safeguarding

- **Electrical Cords, Cables, Multi-plug Power Strips**
  - Loose cords & cables can cause:
    - Tripping hazards
    - Electrical injuries
  - Always control cables & cords
    - People can trip on protruding cables and pull expensive equipment from tables onto feet & legs.
    - National Safety Council reports >4,000 such injuries annually
    - Houston, TX: 12 reported fatalities from falling TV’s in 2006
  - Never use excessive cords or devices in your office.
  - Never overload the electrical circuits.
  - Never “piggyback” multi-plug power strips.
• No unauthorized person may tamper with any electrical appliance, circuit breaker panel, or distribution board.

• Do not overload electrical outlets.
  – If you need additional outlets, submit a Work Request to Physical Plant’s Work Request Center.
  – If an electrical cable, cord, or outlet becomes warm to the touch, it must be disconnected and reported without delay.
  – Only a licensed electrician is allowed to modify the electrical system.

• Cables and extension cords should not be run unprotected beneath carpeting, nor should they span walkways without being secured in an approved encapsulation device or cover.
Electrical Safeguarding

• **Do not** use taped joints or splices to connect cables, as they do not have sufficient insulation or protection from liquids.
• **Do** carry out your own visual inspections of plugs and leads, and have them repaired as necessary.
• Look out for:
  – Physical damage to cables, cords, plugs, outlets, etc.
  – Damage to the plugs
  – Insecure connections to the plug
• **Do** switch off all electrical equipment before unplugging and before cleaning
Back Injuries

• **Stress**
  – Chronic, Slow, Long-term effects

• **Strains**
  – Acute, Rapid, Short-term effect

• **Can Reduce:**
  – mobility
  – productivity
  – employment scope & capability
Manual Handling

- Size & shape
- Weight
- Work station design
- Volume per shift

- Use mechanical lift assist devices, carts, etc., to move heavy or awkward loads.
- Get help!
• Lock up and safeguard!
• Secure your office!
• Don’t prop doors open!
• Secure your data!
• Don’t tempt others!
• Look after visitors and sub-contractors.

DID YOU LOCK IT?

NO!
Accident Reporting

- Report all job-related injuries within 24-hr.
- Report all safety-related incidents within 24-hr.
Slips, Trips & Falls

Prevent them by always remembering the following:

– Do not allow cords & cables to create a tripping hazard.
– Clean up all spills quickly.
– Do not block passageways and walkways.
– Keep office areas clean, neat & organized.
– Keep stacking and storage areas safe.
– Report all hazards and concerns.
Slips, Trips & Falls

Watch where you walk! Be alert for:

– Worn or loose carpets.
– Broken stair tread edges.
– Uneven or broken walking surfaces.
– Chipped floorboards and tiles.
– Pick up objects that fall - pencils, etc.
– Use caution when wearing high heels.
Slips, Trips & Falls

- General Housekeeping
- Cupboards, Cabinets & Carpets
- Cords, Cables & Wires
- Telephone outlets
- Personal Belongings
- Furniture
- Fluids & Floor Surfaces
Stairs

– Avoid distraction on stairs.
– Take one step at a time.
– Don’t load your arms so full of items that you can’t see.
– Keep one hand on the handrail.
– Don’t congregate on stairs or landings.
– Keep stairs well lighted.
– Never use stairs or stairwells for storage.
– Use the elevator when transporting heavy loads.
Filing Cabinets

• Close the drawers!
• Don’t open all the drawers at the same time.
• Open only one drawer at a time.
• Use the handle to close the drawer.
• Never store flammable or hazardous materials in an office filing cabinet.
Office Machines

• Learn how to operate office machines safely before you use them.
• Use caution to keep loose clothing, jewelry, and long hair out of machines.
• Keep hands & fingers clear of the shredder inlet.
• Switch machines off & unplug, before trying to clear a blockage.
Office Machines

• If you notice a tingling sensation when touching a machine, or see smoking or sparking, unplug the device immediately and report it!

• Put a sign on the machine indicating to others that it is “Out of Order.”
Preventing Hand Injuries

Look after your hands:
• When you stick them into drawers & cabinets.
• When you handle papers, staplers, and other office devices.
• Keep sharp objects in safe containers, or guard blades and points.
• Use needles & syringes carefully to avoid injury to yourself and to others.
Preventing Hand Injuries

- Pick up broken glass with a broom & dust pan, or wear leather gloves.
- Wrap the glass in thick paper, and label it so that the cleaning staff will know what it is.
- Slivers of glass should be picked up with a damp paper towel — then, discard the paper towel.
- If you have a lot of broken glass, purchase a “Broken Glass Container” from a safety supply vendor.
Your Eyes

• Don’t rub your eyes with soiled/dirty hands.
• If you get something in your eyes, seek first aid or medical care.
• Keep eyes away from sharp objects, corner cabinets, protruding objects, boxes, pencils, etc.
• See your doctor for regular eye & vision exams.
• Correct poor vision.
• Wear appropriate eye protection, when necessary.
FIRST AID

• If your office has a first aid kit:
  • Make sure you know where the kit is.
  • Ensure the kit is well stocked.
  • Consider taking a first aid course.

• Summon emergency medical services by dialing 9-911 on a campus telephone, or 911 from a cell phone.
Fire Safety
Keep your head!

Don’t panic!
Know the exits!

Ensure easy access to the safest way out!
Prevent Chaos!

Do not run! Walk as rapidly as possible to the nearest exit (or as instructed) by evacuation personnel.
A Safe Workplace

HEALTH

MANAGEMENT

SAFETY

EMPLOYEES
General Duties of Employees

Facilitating a safe, healthful, and secure environment for academics and research.

Safety is the responsibility of all employees, at all times, within all levels of the agency.
The General Duties of Employees
All Employees Must:

• Cooperate with safety, security, and emergency personnel.
• Obey environmental health, safety & security rules.
• Complete the required training for your job.
• Report injuries, accidents, and incidents within 24-hr.
• Report known or suspect hazards & risks.
• Do not place yourself or others in unnecessary risk.
Hygiene

• Practice good personal hygiene to reduce your risk of disease and illness.
  – Wash your hands frequently, using soap & water.
• Keep your office & work area(s) clean.
  – Leave them in the same condition as you expect to find them.
• Report cleaning needs to Custodial Services or to the Building Proctor.
• Keep restrooms & break areas clean. Report cleaning & maintenance needs as soon as possible.
Guess Who Is Responsible For Your Safety?
YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR SAFETY!
Work on Equipment Only If You Are Authorized To Do So!
Practice Proactive Stress Management

For your own benefit...
Make sure that you get adequate relaxation, recreation, rest, and sleep.
SYMBOLOIC SAFETY SIGNS

Read and observe the warnings on all safety signs posted throughout your work area.
WATCH OUT FOR UNSAFE CONDITIONS

Report them within 24 hours
Good Housekeeping Reduces Risk!
Housekeeping

• What is Housekeeping?
  – cleanliness, tidiness, maintenance
  – taking care of your work area
  – good housekeeping calls for constant care

• Benefits of Good Housekeeping
  – safer, easier, better, more fun

• Advantages of Good Housekeeping
  – less tiring, more space, less aggravating, more business-like

• Part of YOUR Job
Use Correct Lifting Methods!

- Bend your knees
- Lift with your legs
- Do not twist while lifting
- Get assistance or use a cart
- Practice back injury prevention
Manual Handling

- Concerns:
  - injuries
  - costs
- Office Equipment & Furniture
- Stationery & Supplies
- Correct Lifting Techniques
- Twisting & Bending
- Mechanical Aids
- Teamwork Lifting - ask for help
Don’t work on electrical equipment if you are not qualified.
Avoid inappropriate jokes, fooling around, horseplay, or teasing fellow employees.

Help Prevent Workplace Violence!
Safety & Health

The best way to get a good idea is to get a lot of ideas.

~ Linus Pauling
Go forth and work safely & successfully!