

A Quick Guide to Office Safety

As seen throughout offices all over the United States, The Ohio State University experiences disabling accidents. These accidents are primarily caused by trips and falls, overexertion, falling objects, striking against objects, and being caught in or between objects. In order to prevent these accidents, there is a need to first look at how these accidents occur.

Slips, Trips, and Falls

Falling is the most common way a disabling injury occurs among OSU office workers. Two of the most common causes for falls are elevation differentials (stairs, curbs, etc.) and slippery floors. Other causes include tripping over objects in hallways, carrying objects so visibility is limited, not using proper techniques while reaching for objects, trying to pick-up items while seated, and striking open drawers while walking.

Lifting and Overexertion

Overexertion is another common office accident. Overexertion can be caused by lifting objects too heavy for a person to carry, stretching while moving objects, carrying objects for long distances. Improper lifting may result in disabling back injuries just as any type of overexertion can result in serious joint damage.

Falling Objects

The most common reason objects fall are improper storage of materials and material handling. When objects are not carried or handled correctly, they may easily fall out of the carrier's hand onto their foot. Improper storage may make shelves and filing cabinets unstable and consequently fall. Also, leaving objects on the corner of desks, tables, cabinets, etc. make it easier for objects to fall.

Watch Your Step

Striking against objects typically occurs when a person is not paying attention. Bumping into objects such as closed doors, doorframes, desks, filing cabinets, and other protruding objects may easily occur and cause injuries. People also strike objects when bending to file. Striking sharp objects, such as the corner of a drawer, may result in lacerations.

Don't Get Caught

Being caught in or between objects is another significant accident type that can be prevented through worker concentration. Fingers can easily be caught in doors, elevator doors, windows, drawers, office machines, and paper cutters.

Here are simple steps to prevent office accidents and promote office safety:

- Replace electrical cords when necessary
- Keep your work area clean and orderly
- Keep all aisles and floors clear of tripping hazards
- Close drawers completely
- Clean up spills immediately
- Eliminate electric cords and wires from walkways
- Do not run electric cords under carpeting
- Make sure your vision is not obstructed while carrying items
- Always use a stepladder for overhead reaching
- Let your body crumple and roll when falling
- Try to store materials inside cabinets, files, and lockers
- Lift with your legs
- Do not lift anything too heavy
- Pay attention to where you are walking and what you are doing at all times
- Do not overload shelves
- Load filing cabinets from the bottom up with heavier items on the bottom
- Avoid excessive bending, twisting, and leaning backward while seated
- Check electrical appliances and cords for wear and shorting to the ground