



State of Delaware

Issue CLXIV

April 2020

Produced by the Insurance Coverage Office

Improve Office Safety with these Tips

For the most part, working in an office environment is one of the safest types of jobs available. You don't typically need to worry about falling objects or getting hit by an indoor vehicle. The fact is, however, that there are still risks present that everyone should be aware of. Fortunately, many of these risks can be minimized or eliminated quite quickly and easily as long as you know what you're looking for. If you are looking to improve your workplace safety, these quick safety tips in the office are a great place to start. They will provide you with real improvements that your office can benefit from for years to come.

Tip #1 – Organizing Computer Wires

One of the biggest hazards in most offices is that there are computer cables running all over the place. In some cases they are just behind people's PCs or under their desks, but in more concerning cases they can be running across the floor. These wires create trip hazards, electrocution hazards and even fire hazards. The easiest way to quickly minimize this risk is to have all the wires going through a wire organizer of some sort. There are dozens of products on the market that make it quick and easy to have your wires kept neat and safe. If a wire organizer is not used gather all cables together and use plastic zip ties to secure them together.

Tip #2 – Not Paying Attention to where you're walking

People in offices are constantly walking to different areas while reading papers or looking at their phones. This puts people at significant risk for bumping in to each other, tripping over something in the area, or even running into a wall. A quick way to eliminate this risk is for all employees to make sure they are paying attention to where they are going.

Tip #3 – Keeping File Drawers Closed

Most offices have file cabinets all over to keep paperwork and other important items. While these are a convenient storage system, they can also create some significant hazards when left open. If a drawer is located low to the ground, it can create a significant tripping hazard. If it is up higher, people could bump their head or other area and get injured. Employees must be conditioned to close all file drawers when not in immediate use.

Tip #4 – Organizing a Loading Dock

Like any workplace, there is a need to have items brought in and shipped out, which is why many office areas have a loading dock. In many cases, this can be quite dangerous because most people are not used to working in this type of environment. Take a moment to organize the area and make it clear where people should be working. Using visual safety signs, floor marking tape or floor marking shapes, and providing training will all help to ensure everyone is safe. Major overhauls of the area are not necessary. Just making it easier to see where things should be and pointing out risks is often enough to keep people safe.

Tip #5 – Never Overload Circuits

People working in offices typically have a computer and at least one monitor plugged into a nearby outlet. They may have things like a pencil sharpener, a desk lamp, or other electronic devices as well. If you're not paying attention, it is quite easy to have a circuit become overloaded. Overloaded circuits can cause power outages, and in some cases even fires or electrical hazards. To help prevent this from occurring, take a few minutes to walk through your office and look at the different outlets in the office. When you find one that has too many things plugged in correct the deficiency.

Tip #6 – Identifying Door Swing

People are constantly walking in and out of areas in most offices, and that typically means having a door swing open when people are walking through. If someone is standing on the other side of the door, this can result in an injury. Many offices like to identify the area where the door will swing, so people will be aware that they are in an area where there is a risk. The easiest way to do this is to take floor tape and place it on the area of the floor where the door will open. You can either just have an arched piece of tape, or you can create stripes on the floor. This type of floor marking tape is easy to apply and can last for years without an issue. If you're looking for an even simpler solution, consider a door swing floor sign.

Tip #7 – Keeping the Lights Bright

Many office environments either neglect to change burnt out light bulbs, or intentionally keep some of them turned off to conserve energy. The fact is, however, that having low light can be quite dangerous. It makes it easier to trip and can actually create more eye strain when working on computers. Keeping the lights on whenever people are working will help keep everyone safer.

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News & Notes

SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

It's probably happened to most of us. That momentary lapse of attention, thinking about a personal problem or distraction by an activity that ends in a slip, trip or fall. A stumble down a stairway. A trip over an uneven surface. It can lead to a variety of regrettable events ranging from a simple bruised shin to an extremely serious injury. It's just one of a number of conditions and situations that set the stage for slips, trips and falls in the workplace.

In the State of Delaware workforce slips, trips and falls account for approximately 20% of all reported accidents.

In general, slips and trips occur due to a loss of traction between the shoe and the walking surface or an inadvertent contact with a fixed or moveable object which may lead to a fall. There are a variety of situations that may cause slips, trips and falls:

- Wet or greasy floors
 - Dry floors with wood dust or powder
 - Uneven walking surfaces
 - Polished or freshly waxed floors
 - Loose flooring, carpeting or mats
 - Transition from one floor type to another
 - Missing or uneven floor tiles and bricks
 - Damaged or irregular steps; no handrails
 - Sloped walking surfaces
 - Shoes with wet, muddy, greasy or oily soles
 - Clutter
 - Electrical cords or cables
 - Open desk or file cabinet drawers
 - Damaged ladder steps
 - Ramps and gang planks without skid-resistant surfaces
 - Metal surfaces — dock plates, construction plates
 - Weather hazards — rain, sleet, ice, snow, hail, frost
 - Wet leaves or pine needles
- When confronted with any of the above circumstances or conditions pay special attention to your actions and behavior. Slips, trips and falls are preventable.



"They're not the tastiest, so try hiding them in a piece of cheese before you take them."

RIDDLES OF THE MONTH

- 1) What goes up but never comes down?
- 2) You see a boat filled with people, yet there isn't a single person on board. How is that possible?
- 3) I have branches, but no fruit, trunk or leaves?
What am I?
- 4) What goes up and down but doesn't move?
- 5) What can't talk but will reply when spoken to?
- 6) What can you keep after giving it to someone?

Answers on Page 2

5 Common Office Injuries

Millions of people today work in an office environment and believe that they are completely safe. While there is no doubt that the hazards of an office job are far fewer, and typically less severe, than those in many other industries, workplace safety should still be a priority.

The following five office injuries impact people every day and can have a serious impact on their life both at work and outside the office. Taking steps to reduce the risk of these injuries can help to keep employees safe so they can remain working productively long into the future.

1. Ergonomic Injuries - Most office workers spend hours a day seated at their desk working at a computer. While at first glance this can seem like an extremely safe job, that is not necessarily always the case. When employees don't sit and work correctly, it can result in a variety of different issues including back problems, joint pain, repetitive movement injuries and much more. Employees need to make sure that all their equipment is set up within easy reach and that the computer monitor and keyboard are at the proper height and distance from them. Employees should get up and walk and stretch every 20 to 30 minutes throughout the entire workday.

2. Damage to the Eyes - Looking at a computer screen for eight or more hours per day can cause serious eye strain, potentially resulting in long term damage to your vision. This type of eye strain can be just as damaging to vision as exposure to certain chemicals or other contaminants that take place in other work environments. Employees should follow the 20-20-20 rule which says that after spending 20 minutes on the computer, a person should spend 20 seconds looking at an object 20 feet away.

3. Fire Related Injuries - Fire safety is extremely important for office safety. With more than 17,000 office fires taking place each year, fire safety is critical. It is even more essential because of the fact that many offices exist in multi-floor buildings where it is possible to become trapped on the upper floors without any way to escape.

Making sure that the office is up to date with all the latest fire safety requirements is a great start. This would include a fire suppression system, working fire extinguishers, and much more. In addition, having multiple fire drills per year will help to ensure that everyone in the office knows where they need to go, and what they need to do, in the event of a fire related emergency.

4. Slip and Fall Accidents - This is one type of accident that is a threat to just about all work environments, including office space. There are many different things in an office environment that can cause people to slip, trip, and fall. Employers should make an effort to identify and eliminate as many of these hazards as possible so that everyone is able to walk through the office as safely as possible.

Some common causes of slips and trips in office environments include the following:

- Cables & Wiring – Many offices have computer cables running throughout the building, and sometimes along the floor.
- Loose Carpeting – If carpeting is getting worn it can create trip hazards. This can happen at any area of the carpet but is especially common in the seams.
- Stairs – Stairs present a risk for falling, and also increase the danger involved.
- Wet Floors – Of course, wet floors are always a risk. While many office environments are carpeted, that is not always the case. In addition, there are always some areas with uncarpeted flooring, such as bathrooms.

5. Workplace Violence - While not common, it can be potentially very dangerous. Office environments, like all workplaces, need to watch out for disgruntled employees, customers, vendors, or others who may become violent. Having the ability to lock doors and keep people out can be an important way to stay safe. In addition, helping employees improve their mental health and limit stress in their life can reduce the risk of an employee becoming violent. It is also important to train employees to always try to deescalate conflict as much as possible. When a customer comes in who is upset about something, the first step should be to try to get them to calm down and deal with the situation rationally. If this becomes impossible, employees should remove themselves from the situation and contact the police to handle the problem.

Focusing on Office Safety

While it doesn't get as much attention as workplace safety in other industries, office employees need to take safety very seriously. A little bit of training and effort ahead of time can help to keep everyone safe in their day to day jobs. Everyone in the office, including both employers and employees have a responsibility to keep themselves and everyone who works around them safe. When we all work together, the risk of accidents and injuries in an office environment can be minimized.

Improve Office Safety with these Tips

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Tip #8 – Safety Signs

Just like any other workplace, the maintenance teams will need to mop floors and clean up messes on a regular basis. In most offices, however, people aren't typically being careful where they are walking as there are usually no significant slip and fall risks. With that in mind, it is especially important to use visible safety signs whenever the floor is wet or there is another type of hazard present.

Tip #9– Emergency Drills

Of course, no list of safety tips in the office would be complete without discussing emergency drills. If done properly, doing drills shouldn't take more than ten minutes, but can really help improve the overall safety of the facility. Holding fire drills, shelter-in-place drills and even emergency medical response drills can help ensure everyone is properly prepared in the event of a real emergency.

Each of these nine safety tips for the office can contribute to helping ensure everyone is safe while at the workplace. This will also help to make sure your office is able to operate smoothly at all times and doesn't have to struggle with downtimes due to accidents, injuries or emergencies.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE...



"Besides rust, any other pre-existing conditions?"

SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month. Nearly everyone is guilty of some form of distracted driving. Here are some good ideas to help you drive more safely:

- Use your cell phone for emergency situations only.
- If you are drowsy, pull off the road.
- You should limit the number of passengers, as well as the level of activity inside the car.
 - Avoid eating while driving.
- Do your multi-tasking outside the car.
- Take your time driving. The goal should always be to keep yourself and your passengers safe on the road.

RIDDLES OF THE MONTH ANSWERS

1. Your age
2. All the people on the boat are married.
3. A bank
4. A staircase
5. An echo
6. Your word

APRIL IS
NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

QUOTATION OF THE MONTH

HAPPINESS
IS NOT THE ABSENCE OF PROBLEMS
BUT THE ABILITY TO DEAL WITH THEM