



Rutgers Environmental Health and Safety



Office Safety

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In general, offices are safe places in which to work. However, there are potential hazards that office workers may encounter. Some of the more common hazards are slips, falls, overexertion, cuts and bruises as well as other types of injuries. Fortunately, all of these hazards are preventable. The following steps will help to eliminate office hazards:

- Know the location of exits, fire alarm pull boxes and emergency equipment. Follow the provisions of the Emergency Action and Fire Prevention Plans. http://rehs.rutgers.edu/rehs_eap.htm.



- Passageways should be kept clear of obstructions or impediments. Do not store equipment, furniture or other materials in egress areas. Torn carpets, loose or curled mats or missing floor tiles should be reported to Facilities Operations and Services.
- Use caution when walking and using stairs, especially if the stairs, floors or your



shoes are wet. Use handrails when ascending and descending stairs, wear appropriate shoes during inclement weather, observe wet floor signs and notify Facilities Operations and Services if floors are wet.

- Keep file cabinet drawers closed. If you are using a drawer, warn other employees working in the area of the open drawer. To prevent the file cabinet from tipping over, only open one drawer at a time, do not overload the top drawers so that they are heavier than the bottom drawers, and bolt file cabinets to each other, the wall or the floor.
- Use a step ladder or step stool to place or retrieve items on shelves. Never use chairs, desks, or other items.
- Use proper lifting techniques when moving boxes, copier paper, furniture, etc. Always lift with your legs.



- Do not run electrical cords for office equipment through aisles. Have additional outlets installed, if needed. Ensure that all office equipment is electrically grounded. Inspect electrical cords for fraying, splices, or missing ground plugs. Have all damaged cords repaired or replaced.
- Machines with exposed moving parts must have appropriate guards. Do not operate a machine until you are properly trained. If you operate a machine, dress suitably for the job. Loose sleeves, neckties, even long hair, can get caught in moving machinery.



These are just some of the hazards that may be found in the office environment. If you identify a hazard in your work area, correct the hazard, if possible. Notify your supervisor, Facilities Operations and Services, or REHS if you cannot correct the hazard. If you have questions or concerns about office safety, please contact REHS at (732) 445- 2550.