

ACCIDENT PREVENTION

Good housekeeping is an important element of accident prevention in offices. Poor housekeeping may lead to fires, injuries to personnel, or unhealthful working conditions. Mishaps caused by dropping heavy cartons and other related office equipment and supplies could also result in serious injuries. Accident prevention begins with the following guidelines:

- Haste when walking between desks results in bruises and falls. Keep electrical cords, computer cables, and other tripping hazards out of aisles and open floor areas.
- File drawers and desk drawers should be kept closed when not in use. Never open more than one file drawer at a time because the file cabinet may fall forward.
- Try to distribute the weight evenly in file cabinets. It is preferable to load the lower drawers first.
- Make sure the chair you use is properly adjusted. When your feet are flat on the floor, your knees should be slightly above the seat. When seated, do not reach to your rear to lift objects. Turn your chair to face the item or get out of the chair.
- When working at video display terminals (VDT) for long periods of time, take five to ten minute breaks every few hours. This will help to reduce fatigue.
- Never use chairs, desks, or other office furniture as a makeshift ladder. Use a stepladder or step-stool. Do not overreach and lose your balance.
- Keep the blades of paper cutters closed when not in use.
- Use a sponge or other wetting device for envelopes. Use rubber finger guards when working with stacks of paper.
- Keep paper clips, thumb tacks, and pins in a safe place and keep razor blades and knives covered.
- Be sure that all electrical cords are in good condition. If a machine gives you a shock or starts smoking, unplug it and report it to your supervisor.
- Typewriters and keyboards for computers should be placed approximately even with your elbow when your arm is hanging freely.
- Be very careful when lifting heavy objects such as large boxes of paper and typewriters. Face the object being lifted, pull it close to your body, and lift in a slow steady motion using your legs.
- Office chemicals, e.g., copier chemicals, etc., should only be used in areas with adequate ventilation to remove any fumes.

