



5 Minute Safety Meetings

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Office Safety

Accidents in the workplace are a fairly common occurrence, resulting in mutilation, death, and lifestyle-altering accidents. For the most part, these accidents stem from falls, however, other causes factor in. Great consideration is given to ergonomics, arranging the environment, or adapting the job to fit the worker. Ergonomics help to eliminate many potential injuries and disorders associated with the overuse of muscles, bad posture and repetitive motion.

Falls

- Always use a ladder or step stool to retrieve anything above shoulder level.
- Ladders, or step stools, should be sturdy and not have any broken rungs or legs.
- Do not lean too far back in chairs. This may result in over-balancing and a fall.
- Never use ladder substitutes such as chairs or boxes.
- Be sure the pathway is clear before you walk.
- Secure electrical cords and wires away from walkways.
- Avoid excessive bending, twisting, and leaning backward while seated.

Filing Cabinets/Bookcases

- Fill the second drawer from the bottom in a four-drawer filing cabinet before any of the others, to weight the bottom and to prevent it from tilting over.
- Return drawers and doors to the closed position after use to prevent bumping and tripping. Never open more than one drawer or door at a time.
- Place file cabinets where their use will not interfere with traffic patterns.
- Secure cabinets or bookcases taller than 64 inches to the wall to prevent toppling over.

Electrical Equipment

- Frayed electrical cords, loose or broken electrical wires, broken outlet covers and receptacles, and worn or broken electrical plugs are dangerous and should be repaired or replaced before being used again.
- Moisture and electricity do not mix. Placing liquids on or around electrical equipment (such as computers, radios, copiers, printers or microwaves) increases the risk of electrocution if the liquid spills and gets into the electrical equipment. This includes wet or sweaty hands.
- Do not block electrical panel doors. If an electrical malfunction should occur, the panel door and anything else in front of the door will become very hot.
- Electrical panel doors should always be kept closed, to prevent "electrical flashover" in the event of an electrical malfunction.

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Fire Safety

- Every office should post accepted evacuation routes in conspicuous places and have at least one practice office evacuation drill per year.
- A pre-determined emergency meeting place should be established so that an office head count can be taken after the office is evacuated. This will determine who may or may not still be in the building for the emergency response personnel.
- In planning an office, an escape route should be designed to ensure that employees would be able to make a fast exit in the event of a fire or other emergency. These routes must be completely free from obstruction.
- Office doors should always be free of obstructions, to permit egress in case of an emergency.
- All new office employees should be trained in the accepted evacuation practices for the office.
- Everyone should be aware that there are a surprising number of flammable materials used in offices.
- These products include white-out, glue, cleaning solvents, and even fingernail polish.
- Remember that you should not smoke when using these materials. The air around you could be full of flammable vapors, which, if they come into contact with the high temperature of the cigarette end, could ignite and explode.
- Wastepaper baskets are another fire danger; all too often lit cigarettes or burning matches are thrown into them.
- Fire equipment, extinguishers, fire door exits, and sprinkler heads should remain unobstructed. Materials should be at least 18 inches minimum away from sprinkler heads.

Lifting

- Take a balanced stance feet placed shoulder-width apart. When lifting something from the floor, squat close to the load.
- Keep your back in its neutral or straight position. Tuck in your chin so your head and neck continue the straight back line.
- Grip the object with your whole hand, rather than only with your fingers. Draw the object close to you, holding your elbows close to your body to keep the load and your body weight centered.
- Lift by straightening your legs. Let your leg muscles, not your back muscles do the work. Tighten your stomach muscles to support your back. Maintain your neutral back position as you lift.
- Never twist when lifting. When you must turn with a load, turn your whole body, feet first.
- Never carry a load that blocks your vision.
- To set something down, use the same body mechanics designed for lifting.