

Office Safety

A SAFETY TALK FOR DISCUSSION LEADERS

This safety talk is designed for discussion leaders to use in preparing safety meetings.

Set a specific time and date for your safety meeting. Publicize your meeting so everyone involved will be sure to attend.

Review this safety talk before the meeting and become familiar with its content. Make notes about the points made in this talk that pertain to your workplace. You should be able to present the material in your own words and lead the discussion without reading it.

Seating space is not absolutely necessary, but arrangements should be made so that those attending can easily see and hear the presentation.

Collect whatever materials and props you will need ahead of time. Try to use equipment in your workplace to demonstrate your points.

DURING THE MEETING

Give the safety talk in your own words. Use the printed talk merely as a guide.

The purpose of a safety meeting is to initiate discussion of safety problems and provide solutions to those problems. Encourage employees to discuss hazards or potential hazards they encounter on the job. Ask them to suggest ways to improve safety in their area.

Don't let the meeting turn into a gripe session about unrelated topics. As discussion leader, it's your job to make sure the topic is safety. Discussing other topics wastes time and can ruin the effectiveness of your safety meeting.

At the end of the meeting, ask employees to sign a sheet on the back of this talk as a record that they attended the safety meeting. Keep this talk on file for your records.

Office Safety

In general, offices are safe places in which to work. However, there are a number of practices and tools of the trade that can be very hazardous.

One of the worst offenders is the file cabinet. Drawers left open are "striking against" hazards, and a full top drawer with empty or partly filled bottom drawers can cause the cabinet to tip over.

Standing on chairs to reach high shelves is another dangerous practice; use a stepstool or stepladder. But when you do use them, make sure you're not in front of a door that can swing inward and knock the ladder or stool over. In addition, some chairs can be tipped over if you lean back too far.

Some offices use rotating duplicators. Watch for finger and hand hazards, and be careful if you have long hair.

Electric typewriters, electric letter openers, paper shredders and other electric appliances must be grounded or double-insulated. Severe shocks can be received, especially when operating in damp or wet conditions.

Paper clips, pens, pencils and some kinds of paper can cause slipping hazards--pick them up when you see them on the floor.

Paper has sharp edges and can cause painful cuts.

Carrying objects that block your view of the path ahead can bring about a serious collision. Approach swinging doors cautiously.

Elevator doors can be severe pinch points. Don't try to beat the elevator doors. Sometime they may not retract, and the result could be fatal.

Lifting can result in back injuries. Get help with heavy or awkward loads.

Carbon paper in wastebaskets is extremely combustible. Never dispose of matches or cigarette or pipe ashes in the same wastebasket as carbon paper.

Let's take a look at drafting or art department hazards. Perhaps compasses or drawing instruments are the worst offenders because of their very sharp points.

Knives, paper edges and paper cutters also require an alert and careful user.

Push pins and thumbtacks can produce serious puncture wounds.

Sharp-pointed pencils and drawing pens can also cause severe puncture wounds.

Not often mentioned, but of great injury potential, is horseplay. Rarely is any serious bodily harm intended when workers "fool around." However, some of the worst injuries, even fatalities, happen because of horseplay. It can happen anywhere, anytime. On record are cases of burst eardrums, broken arms, blindness and fatalities. And, of course, there are an untold number of less serious but still painful injuries.

Last but not least, good office safety includes knowing where fire extinguishers are located and the proper fire escape route. Access to the extinguishers or escape routes must never be blocked.

Bear in mind that seemingly commonplace office tools and equipment can be real hazards if you do not treat them with thought, alertness and respect.