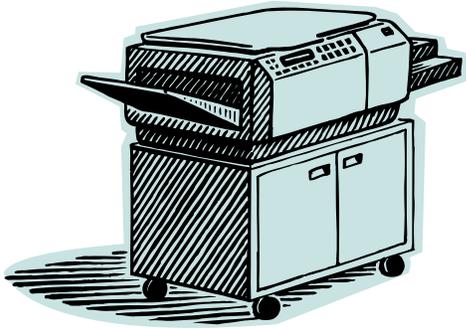


Safety Note #37

GENERAL OFFICE SAFETY



Information available from the Consumer Product Safety Commission indicates more than 15,000 people were treated in hospitals for office injuries during 2003. Typical office injuries include strains to backs and shoulders, repetitive motion impairments to joints, and lacerations and contusions to fingers and hands. Other office injuries result from trips and falls, poor lifting mechanics and overextending lifting capacity, bumping into objects, and electrical shocks. **Videos E-013 and E-085 on Office Safety are available for loan from the ANR Environmental Health and Safety Library at <http://safety.ucanr.edu>.**

Recommended Safe Office Practices

- Thoroughly review and understand information provided in office business machine operator's manuals with particular attention given to descriptions of safety procedures.
- Use proper lifting techniques when moving office objects. See [Safety Note #10](#), Safe Lifting Practices for further information about correct lifting techniques.
- After use, always close desk and file drawers to prevent bumping injuries.
- Never open two file drawers at the same time - this can cause the file cabinet to tip over.
- Do not overreach, use a step stool or ladder to reach elevated items.
- Keep hallways and aisles unobstructed to prevent trip and fall injuries. See [Safety Note #135](#), Preventing Slip, Trip, and Fall Injuries.
- Store heavy office items and supplies on lower shelves.
- Do not store items on top of bookshelves or file cabinets.
- Do not block fire extinguishers, exit doors, or sprinkler heads.
- California regulations require bookshelves to be anchored to walls.
- Arrange computer workstations to reduce the potential for repetitive motion injuries. See [Safety Note #28](#), Computer Workstations for additional information about enhancing work area ergonomics.
- When fixing paper jams in photocopiers or facsimile machines follow the manufacturer's instructions printed on panels and levers. Avoid touching surfaces that are labeled with "Caution Hot" signs.
- When working with office equipment pay attention to the task you are performing.
- Use extra caution when using a paper cutter or feeding paper into a paper shredder. See [Safety Note #52](#), Paper Shredder Safety.
- Always disconnect electrical cords from receptacles by pulling on the plug. Never run extension or electrical cords under carpeting. Report and do not use damaged electrical cords, plugs, or receptacles. See [Safety Note #144](#), Electrical Extension Cord Safety.
- Promptly clean up spills, particularly fluid spills on tile, sealed concrete, or hardwood floors.
- Become familiar with your work area and be aware of any workplace hazards.
- Maintain good housekeeping in offices. See [Safety Note #66](#), Good Housekeeping Practices.
- California regulations require employees to be trained on building evacuation and fire prevention plans.