

Safety Note #171

OFFICE STORAGE SAFETY



Photo: ANR Second Street

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), office workers are injured by being struck by objects, bumping into objects, or getting caught between objects. This includes getting hit by objects that fall from cabinet tops, and cabinets that fall over if not properly balanced and anchored. These situations can lead to injuries and potentially death. Proper storage and handling devices should be available to keep materials safely stored out of the way, and to ensure safe access to them.

California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 8, Section 3241 states, "Materials, wherever stored, shall not create a hazard". The University of California Seismic Safety Program requires bookcases and cabinets over 4 feet in height to be secured against falling.

Recommended Storage Practices:

- Storerooms and storage areas are to be kept clean, orderly and in sanitary condition.
- Storage racks must be designed to safely support intended loads and not be loaded in excess of their design capacity.
- Clearance must be kept around doorways, electrical panels, fire extinguishers and light fixtures.
- Storage of materials must be maintained 2 feet or more below the ceiling in non-sprinkler rooms and 18 inches or more below sprinkler head deflectors.
- Aisleways must have a minimum clearance of 24 inches.
- The clearance between stored materials and unit heaters, space heaters, and duct furnaces must be three feet in all directions.
- Freestanding bookcases and cabinets over four feet in height must be anchored to prevent tipping and falling.
- Freestanding bookcases and cabinets located where there is a potential to block doors or exit passages must be anchored, regardless of height.
- No storage is allowed, AT ANY TIME, in any exit, corridor, stairway, or other exit way.
- No storage is allowed under stairways, unless one hour rated construction has been provided for this purpose.
- Boiler rooms, mechanical rooms, and electrical rooms shall not be used for storage of combustible and flammable materials.
- Heavy materials should be stored low and lighter materials stored above.
- Items stored over six feet in height must be retained from accidental falling.
- Ladders, footstools, and hand carts should be provided at storerooms for safe handling of materials.
- Storage areas must be kept clear of slip, trip, and fall hazards.



Photo: UCCE Monterey County