

Occupations and Workplaces

Office - General

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What does an office worker do?

Office staff may type or file documents, correspondence, reports, statements and other material. Their workstation usually has a computer, laptop, keyboard, mouse, monitor, and telephone, among other equipment.

The main duties of an office worker include:

- Perform duties such as answering telephone calls and making appointments.
- Interact with clients who may be upset or angry (e.g., potential for harassment or bullying).
- Photocopy and collate documents.
- Maintain and update filing, inventory, mailing and database systems.
- Open, sort and route incoming mail and courier packages.
- Process reports, applications, receipts, expenditures and other documents.

What are some health and safety issues for office workers?

Office environments present a number of hazards, including:

- Perfumes and other [scents](#) (potential allergens).
- In some cases, exposure to [cleaning products](#).
- [Indoor air quality](#) or exposure to toxic substances.

- [Sitting](#) for long periods of time.
 - Working in from [awkward positions](#), or performing [repetitive manual tasks](#).
 - [Lifting](#) awkward or heavy objects.
 - [Eye strain](#).
 - Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) from excessive [computer](#) use or improper ergonomic situations.
 - Improperly adjusted [chairs](#).
 - Working in uncomfortable [temperatures](#).
 - Annoying or distracting [noise](#) and vibration from electronic equipment.
 - [Slips, trips and falls](#).
 - Injuries from falling files or other objects
 - Cuts from [sharp blades or edges](#) of office tools such as scissors, mail openers, etc.
 - [Risk of violence](#).
 - [Working alone](#).
 - [Stress](#).
 - [Bullying](#).
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What are some preventive measures for office workers?

- Learn about how to avoid musculoskeletal pain or injury from [repetitive](#) or physically awkward tasks. Take breaks as needed.
 - Learn safe [lifting](#) techniques.
 - Keep all work areas clear of clutter.
 - Set up your workstation ergonomically. Have a competent person assess your workstation for ergonomic issues. [Know personal or individual risk factors](#).
 - Know how to relax strained body parts by doing correct [stretching](#) exercises.
 - Know emergency evacuation plan and procedures.
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What are some good general safe work practices?

- Follow company safety rules.
- Learn [fire safety](#).

- Learn about chemical safety, [WHMIS](#) and [SDSs](#).
 - Know how to [report a hazard and near miss](#).
 - Practice safe [lifting](#).
 - Follow [good housekeeping](#) procedures.
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