

Office

Health and Safety Guide



Objectives

This guide provides an overview of potential health and safety hazards in offices and offers ways to work safely.

Scope

The guide covers potential health and safety hazards in typical offices and ways of preventing risk of injuries and illnesses related to office work. The main focus is the integration of health and safety within all aspects of office work.

Target Audience

The guide is intended for anyone who works in an office – including workers, human resources (HR) professionals, health and safety committees, and health and safety professionals. Office managers will find this guide a useful reference in developing policies and practices to prevent injury and illness. This guide is also a useful resource that can be used as handout material for employee orientation and training sessions.

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Psychosocial and Psychological Hazards: Conditions at work that can result in violence, bullying, discrimination and stress are psychosocial hazards.

3. Basic Steps in Risk Prevention / Hazard Recognition Methods

Listed below are examples of ways to help recognize workplace hazards.

Job Safety Analysis

Job safety analysis (also known as job hazard analysis) is the first step in developing correct (safe) work procedures. Job safety analysis involves the following steps:

1. Select a job,
2. Break the job down into a sequence of tasks (steps),
3. Identify potential hazards involved in each step, and
4. Define preventive measures.

Example of Job Safety Analysis (JSA) Worksheet

Operation: Database Records

Job: Data Entry

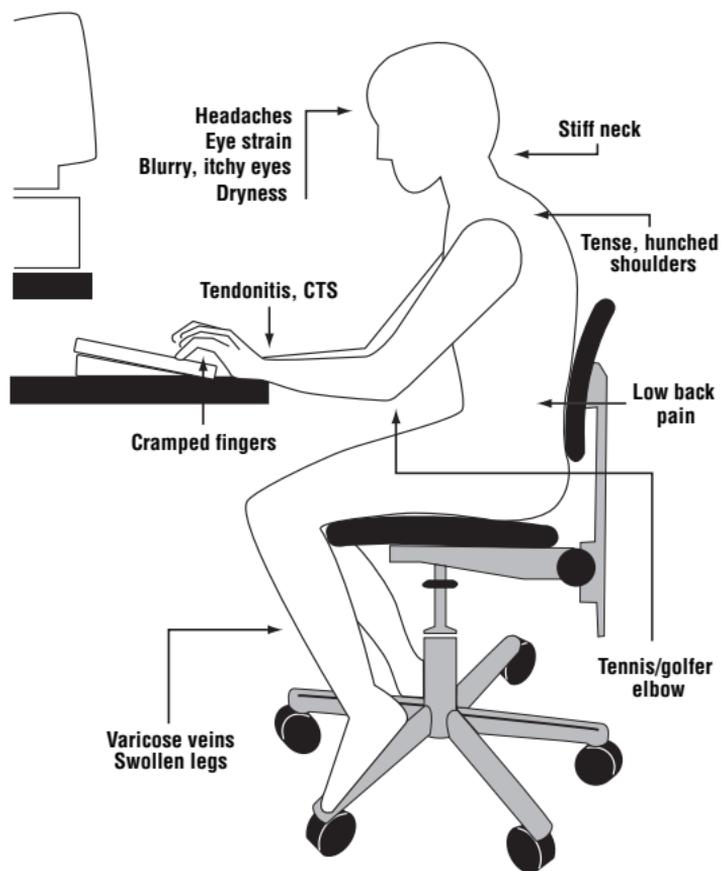
Task	Who does it	Hazards	How to prevent injury/accident
Data Entry by computer	Joe Brown	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Repetitive hand movements/ key-boarding/ use of mouse- Long periods of time at workstation without breaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Set pace of work to allow for breaks (approximately 5-10 minutes per hour)- Ensure workstation is adjusted specifically for Joe- Assign variety of tasks, including some that involve full body movement (such as filing, walking, to printer, etc.)- Monitor for any changes to health

Applicable Legislation: OH&S Act and Regulations (refer to the act and regulations in your jurisdiction, if applicable)

Date: _____ Developed by: _____

For more details, please refer to the CCOHS publication, "Job Safety Analysis Made Simple."

Tiredness / Overall Deconditioning



2. Workstation Design

Workstation design includes:

- Work surface (desks)
- Seats (chairs)
- Accessories
- Workstation layout
- Working space

Consumer Symbols

Chemical products sold for use in a general household or sold in a retail store will be labelled with “consumer symbols”.

Those products that have certain hazards (such as toxic, corrosive, flammable) have their packaging and labelling regulated by the Federal Government. Since many of these chemical products are also used in the workplace, education on the meaning of these symbols is important. In some cases, suppliers will provide a MSDS upon request.

Consumer Classifications

Symbol	Description	Examples
	CORROSIVE -- The product can burn your skin or eyes. If swallowed, it will damage your throat and stomach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water repellent for shoes or boots in an aerosol container• Spray paint in an aerosol container
	FLAMMABLE -- The product or its fumes will catch fire easily if it is near heat, flames or sparks. Rags used with this product may begin to burn on their own.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Toilet bowl cleaner• Oven cleaner
	EXPLOSIVE -- The container can explode if heated or punctured. Flying pieces of metal or plastic from the container can cause serious injury, especially to eyes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contact adhesives• Gasoline
	POISON -- If you swallow, lick, or, in some cases, breathe in the chemical, you could become very sick or die.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Windshield washer fluid• Furniture polish

Shelves

✓ ENSURE shelves are securely anchored to the wall.

MAKE sure objects on the shelves are placed where they cannot fall over.

NEVER climb on shelves - use an approved ladder.

X DO NOT overload shelves. If one gives way, it could bring others down onto you.

DO NOT place heavy objects on overhead shelves.

DO NOT try to catch objects falling from a shelf or cabinet.

Office Equipment

Most offices have equipment that can cause injuries if not used safely by trained people. Examples include:

- Cutting and binding machines, including paper shredders
- Equipment for folding and stuffing envelopes
- High speed copiers and printers
- Movable storage
- Ladders and other maintenance equipment



Prevent Injuries

- Train employees on how to use the right equipment and to use it safely.
- Install and use machine guards.
- Keep long hair, neckties, fingers and jewellery away from moving equipment or parts.

Appendix B — Office Inspection Checklist

Sample

OFFICE INSPECTION CHECKLIST			
Date	✓ Satisfactory × Requires Action		
Inspectors	Location	Condition	Comments
BULLETIN BOARDS AND SIGNS			
Are they clean and readable?			
Is the material changed frequently?			
FLOORS			
Is there loose material, debris, worn carpeting?			
Are the floors slippery, oily or wet?			
STAIRWAYS AND AISLES			
Are they clear and unblocked?			
Are stairways well lighted?			
Handrails, handholds in place			
Are the aisles marked and visible?			
EQUIPMENT			
Are guards, screens and sound-dampening devices in place and effective?			
Is the furniture safe?			
Worn or badly designed chairs?			
Sharp edges on desks and cabinets?			
Poor ergonomics (keyboard positioning, chair adjustment)?			
Crowding?			
Are any ladders safe and well maintained?			