

## Today's Topic/Issue

We seem to think injuries that happen in the operational areas will disappear at the office door. However, we all know that is not true. It is not unusual to hear of office workers tripping over a cable, spilling a hot drink over themselves, straining a muscle trying to move or lift a heavy piece of office equipment or tripping down the stairs.

The office environment does have its share of potential hazards, but by staying aware of office safety practices we can eliminate the risk posed by the hazards.

### QUICK QUIZ

What risks and hazards are present in office environments?



## Health & Wellbeing

Office staff are encouraged to consider their long-term health and wellbeing as well as immediate safety concerns:



### Physical Factors:

Nutrition  
Exercise  
Ergonomics



### Psychological Factors:

Job security  
Stress levels  
Work/Life balance  
Workload  
Job demands



### Social Factors:

Colleague relationships  
Manager/employee relationships  
Culture  
Community

## Do's & Don'ts



Do - practice good personal hygiene to reduce your risk of disease and illness  
Do - keep your office & work area(s) clean  
Do - practise good stress relief methods such as regular breaks and fresh air as opposed to fast food or sugary snacks  
Do - avoid inappropriate jokes  
Do - get up from your desk and move around at least every hour



Don't - leave unwashed plates, mugs or anything else used for food and drink at your workstation  
Don't - come into work if you have a contagious illness such as the flu  
Don't - fool around, engage in horseplay, or tease fellow employees

## REMEMBER

Like any other work area, hazards, incidents and accidents need to be reported to your line manager



Office environments are often seen as risk free environments, but the risks and hazards are just as prevalent as other work environments if they are not managed appropriately.

### QUICK QUIZ

**“What risks and hazards are present in office environments?”**

Housekeeping:

Take responsibility for your workstation. Store everything in a proper location; don't let food waste build up and take preventative action so that dust doesn't build up

Slips, Trips and Falls:

Carpeting and other skid-resistant surfaces can serve to reduce falls. Marble or tile can become very slippery – particularly when wet – so take care when moving on these surfaces. Wear appropriate footwear.

Make sure that trip hazards such as trailing cables are removed from walkways.  
Stairs - Avoid distraction on stairs. Take one step at a time. Don't load your arms so full of items that you can't see. Keep one hand on the handrail. Don't congregate on stairs or landings. Keep stairs well lighted.

Never use stairs or stairwells for storage.



### Manual Handling:

Even when you are in an office environment follow the correct manual handling procedures and be especially aware if you need to travel between floors or through corridors.

### Objects Falling from Height:

Proper storage of heavy items can help reduce the number of office injuries. Large stacks of materials and heavy equipment can cause major injuries if they are knocked over. Store heavy objects close to the floor, and ensure that the load capacity of shelves or storage units is never exceeded.

### Electricity:

Damaged and ungrounded power cords or extension cords pose a serious fire hazard. Cords should be inspected regularly for wear and taken out of service if they are frayed or have exposed wire. Make sure, cords are not overloading outlets. The most common causes of fires started by extension cords are improper use and overloading.

### Ergonomic Issues:

Perhaps the most prevalent injuries in an office setting are related to ergonomics. Because office workers spend the bulk of their day seated at a desk and working on a computer, they are prone to strains and other injuries related to posture and repetitive movement. Ensure DSE assessment has been done.

### Poor Lighting:

Ensure that your work environment is well lit, utilising natural light as much as possible. Giving your eyes a rest and allowing them to focus on things at varying distances can help reduce strain and fatigue.



Noise:

Ensure that your work environment does not expose you to unsafe levels of noise. Damage to hearing often occurs with continuous exposure to dangerous levels over a longer period of time.

Fire Evacuation Routes:

Do not block escape routes or prop open fire doors. Items never should be stored along an emergency exit route. These paths should remain free of clutter. Fire doors should not be held open by unapproved means (such as with a fire extinguisher or chair), as this creates a significant fire hazard.

Fire hazards:

Fire takes three things to begin – oxygen, heat and fuel. All modern offices utilise equipment which gets hot over time. Turn this equipment off when it is not in use and maintain it properly and regularly so that it doesn't overheat. Keep the areas tidy including the removal of dust as dust inside these machines is the fuel required to start a fire.

## REMEMBER

Ensure that all employees, including those whose main workstation is in offices, understand have access to the incident reporting systems and feel comfortable and confident in using it.



# Toolbox Talk - Attendance Sheet

Site/Department Name: .....

Trainer Name: .....

Signature: .....

Toolbox Talk Topic: .....

Date: .....

Name	Signature

Any further feedback or questions from attendees regarding this toolbox talk topic?