

Safety Matters—

Even In an Office

Your ordinary office routine may *seem* safe enough. You probably take the elevator or stairs, use the coffee maker, open and close drawers, and lift stacks of files comfortably and easily every day. Although all of these daily office activities may be second nature to you, they can be more dangerous than you might suppose—especially because you and your co-workers don't expect problems. Learn to look with new eyes for these common safety hazards in your office.

✎ Falls are the most common office accidents. They happen while people are walking, climbing stairs, even leaning back in chairs. Keep an eye out for telephone extension and electrical cords, and open drawers, which can cause people to trip. Loose or worn carpeting, slippery floors or packages left sitting in aisles can send even the most sure-footed for a nasty tumble. Correct these hazards when you can, and when you can't, point them out to others to prevent accidents.

✎ File cabinets are a primary source of office injuries. Top-heavy drawers can cause a cabinet to topple over. Sharp corners of metal file cabinets can cause injuries. Drawers can pinch fingers if slammed shut. Open only one drawer at a time, and close drawers slowly and carefully.

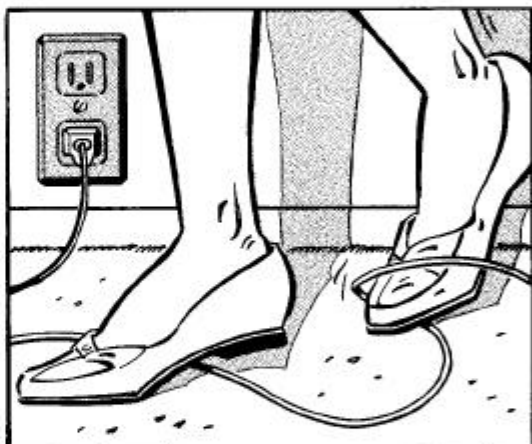
✎ Office avalanches occur when too many boxes, papers or other materials are stacked too high for safety. All it takes is someone to pull out something from halfway down the stack to send everything tumbling down. Keep papers inside cabinets—not on top of them.

✎ Electrical shock can result from frayed wiring, improper grounding or malfunctioning equipment. Check equipment and plugs regularly. All offices should have a three-wire grounding system.

✎ Fires can occur anytime. Smoking is a common cause; so is electrical equipment. Look for people lighting up in no-smoking areas, or throwing matches or still-lit cigarettes on the floor or in wastebaskets. Flammable materials that are too close to coffee makers, space heaters or hot plates are also dangerous; keep them at least 18 inches away.

✎ Lifting loads improperly can lead to strains and other back injuries. Twisting or jerking while lifting can also cause injury. No one should try to lift a heavy or awkward load alone.

✎ Repetitive motions, such as those involved in typing, can cause injuries to the hands and arms. Anyone working on a keyboard should be trained in proper hand position and should take breaks to exercise and stretch hands and arms.



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