Office Environment Checklist

The office environment has relatively few hazardous chemicals and no heavy or moving machinery. However, like their production counterparts, office employees should know what to do in case of an emergency, be provided with a safe and efficient work station, and have periodic safety training.

To recognize potential problems and implement solutions, consider the following suggestions:

Practice Good Housekeeping

A key aspect of office safety is proper handling and storage of materials and supplies. This includes trash removal and recycling, destruction of discarded, sensitive company information, and maintenance of the premises, including removal of ice and snow. Supplies and stationery should be kept where they are easily accessible, with proper step-stools and ladders provided for hard-to-reach areas.

Control Hazardous Materials

Each employee should be made aware of all hazardous materials they might contact in their work area. Safety Data Sheets (SDS) should be provided for each hazardous substance used, along with instructions for safe handling, use and disposal.

Prevent Back Injury

Train employees how to lift safely. Remind them, safe lifting includes knowing their limitations, getting help if an item is too heavy, lifting with the legs instead of the back, keeping items close, and not twisting when lifting and lowering.

Prevent Slips, Trips and Falls

Arrange or cover wiring (electrical, telephone, computers etc.) to eliminate the possibility of trips and falls. This includes wiring under desks. Traffic areas should be clear of boxes, cartons and other materials. Make sure floors are kept from becoming slippery and spills are cleaned up quickly. Throw rugs should have a non-slip backing.

Keep File Cabinets Orderly

Drawers from file cabinets should not open into high-traffic areas. Distribute cabinet contents evenly to prevent tipping. Drawers should be closed immediately to prevent strike injuries and tip-overs.

Be Prepared for Fire

Ensure fire alarms and smoke detectors are available and in good working order. Extinguishers must be easy to locate, and employees should know how to use them.

Keep from Getting Zapped

Proper use of electrical outlets and cords will greatly reduce the possibility of fire or shock. Make sure you have approved surge protectors and a sufficient number of electrical outlets in your work area. Plug power strips directly into wall outlets and not into other power strips or extension cords. Always unplug the equipment before attempting adjustments or repairs.

Maintain Environmental Quality

Air that is too hot or cold, or fouled by cigarette smoke and other pollutants, can place physical and psychological stress, thus reducing an employee’s efficiency. Quality problems can arise in newer, energy-efficient buildings as well as older ones.

Be Ergonomically Correct

Work stations should be designed to minimize or remove stress placed on the body, particularly through use of personal computers. Measures can be taken to reduce eye strain and the amount of reaching, bending, and routine hand-wrist movements that lead to fatigue and musculoskeletal discomfort.

Be Ready with First Aid

Every workplace should have at least the basic first aid supplies and equipment required for an operation of its size and the types of hazards to which its employees might be exposed. Adequate training should be provided for designated first aid personnel, and all employees should know how, where, and from whom they will get attention.

Have an Emergency Action Plan

Your company should have a plan in place to control events and minimize the effects of an emergency. Such a plan can include: evacuation routes, meeting areas and employee accounting procedure; notification of emergency services; personal injury and property damage response; and protection of company information, both hard copy and electronic media.

There's a right way and a wrong way to do just about everything. Make sure you're doing everything to ensure yours is the right way.