**Office Worker Safety Tips**

**When you think of working in an office, you think that you are in a relatively “safe space“ and that you are not susceptible to office injury. However, on the contrary, there is potential for office related injuries. The Office of Risk Management has compiled a list of potential dangers that every office worker should keep in mind.**

* File Drawers. File cabinets with too many open drawers could potentially tip over causing serious injury. Be sure to open one file drawer at a time, and then close when finished. Securing the file cabinet to the wall may be an option as well.
* Desk Drawers. I think we have all done this one at one point or another. You open a bottom desk drawer in a hurry, leave it open, turn around and “bang” you hit your shin on the open drawer. Be sure to close all desk drawers immediately after obtaining what you need to avoid this unpleasant surprise.
* Safe Stacking. Large stacks of heavy items such as files can cause injury as well if knocked over. Store heavy stacks of items or files close to the floor.
* Carrying a large number of files or boxes. Never exceed your ability to carry these objects. You should always be able to see the floor when you are carrying these types of items in order to avoid a trip/fall injury. If necessary, make multiple trips, or ask for help.
* Shelving. Shelving or storage units all have a load capacity. Be sure not to exceed this limit.
* Ergonomic injuries. This is a big concern for office workers. To maintain a neutral posture, your head should be centered over your neck and shoulders, wrists flat and elbows resting comfortably at your side. If your feet won’t touch the ground unless you lean forward, use a footrest, or request a different type of chair.
* Take regular breaks to get up and move around. To some people, sitting is the new smoking. Sitting all day puts office workers at risk for numerous health problems.
* Use a headset for prolonged or frequent phone use. Cradling the phone between your shoulder and ear can cause neck and back pain.
* Keep your work area clean. Clean up spills immediately, keep walkways and work area free of clutter, and tie up or secure cords so they don’t pose a trip hazard.
* Know the office emergency procedures. Make sure you know what to do in the event of a fire, storm, violent intruder, medical problem or other emergency.
* Correct mouse placement. It is recommended that the mouse always be placed beside the keyboard.
* Correct monitor position. Prevent Blindness America recommends workers place their computer monitors slightly below eye level and 20-26 inches from their eyes.
* Office workers should tell their eye doctor if they spend a large portion of the day working on the computer. The doctor can check the efficiency of vision at 20-30 inches – the typical distance a computer monitor should be placed. Glasses are available for computer use that allow the wearer to see the full monitor without having to excessively strain the neck.
* Increase font size on computer. Small font sizes on the computer can strain both your vision and your neck, as workers tend to pull the head forward to view smaller print. A simple adjustment to the font size on the computer screen can eliminate the need for this.