



The Safety & Risk Services unit endeavors to provide a safe working environment for all employees at San José State University. The following safety tips are designed to protect SJSU office workers from potential accidents and contribute to a healthy and productive work environment. Should you have any questions about the safety of your office, contact the campus Safety Specialist at 924-2155.

COMMON ACCIDENT TYPES

Falls

Falls are the most common office accident. Injuries may result from slips or falls from chairs and elevations. Slip and trip injuries may be caused by wet floors, worn footwear, trash on the floor, or a combination. Chair falls can occur when a person sits, rises, or moves on a chair. Leaning back and tilting chairs are also causes. Falls from elevations are represented by situations such as standing on chairs or other office furniture and ladders.

Overexertion

Injuries due to overexertion occur when employees attempt to move heavy objects. Reaching, stretching, twisting, bending down, and straightening the spine are associated with these injuries. Even activities that do not appear likely to strain a person's stamina can result in severely painful injuries. Avoid twisting and extended reaching with one hand to grip a heavy object from the desktop or elevated shelves. This action can cause a body strain injury (i.e. ligament sprain or muscle strain). Try turning your whole body toward the object and using two hands with a good grip to handle it.

Striking Against

"Striking against" includes injuries resulting from bumping into objects such as doors, desks, file cabinets, open drawers, and other individuals. For example, if you are bending down picking up an object, you can bump your head when getting back up. Be conscious of your environment; look out for open file cabinet doors, exposed edges, and desktops.

Objects Striking

"Objects striking" usually involves a falling object, such as cabinets, drawers, office machines, and doors, striking a worker. In our seismically active location, consideration should be taken as to how shelves are loaded and secured, especially when someone normally sits beneath the stored materials.

Repetitive Motion

Repetitive motion injuries, also known as "cumulative trauma", include tendonitis and carpal tunnel syndrome. Computer keying is a frequently cited cause of this injury, although it has many causes and compounding factors. Prevention of repetitive motion injuries involves addressing issues pertaining to an individual's workstation and work habits. If you suspect you are at risk of such an injury, inform your supervisor and request a workstation ergonomic evaluation from Safety and Risk Services.

ACCIDENT INFORMATION

To control any type of accident, hazards must be eliminated and exposures reduced. Office design should be efficient, convenient, and safe.

File Cabinets

File cabinets are a common source of injuries. File drawers should be kept closed when not removing or replacing materials. A full top drawer with empty or partially filled bottom drawers can cause the cabinet to tip over. File drawers should not open to narrow aisles. Do not place cabinets next to doors. During earthquakes, unsecured cabinets have fallen over, blocking doors. Cabinets should be bolted together or fastened to the floor or wall. Don't store heavy materials on top of cabinets.

Aisles

Aisles through work areas should be unobstructed. Wastebaskets should be placed out of the way where people will not accidentally trip over them. Obstructions, including electrical cords, should be placed against walls or partitions, under desks, or in corners. Worn or warped mats under chairs should be replaced. Rubber or plastic rain mats should be replaced when torn or when the edges are curled.

Electric / Computer Cords

Use of electric extension cords should be avoided, if at all possible. Extension cords are designed for temporary use only, meaning they cannot replace permanent wiring for equipment. Cords should be kept out of aisles, and if cords must cross the floor, they need to be covered with rubber mats designed for this purpose. Bundle your computer, printer and other electronic cords with a strong, plastic tie, or place them inside a long tube with a slit cut lengthwise.

Electrical Appliances

Electrical appliances need to be maintained and regularly inspected for defects. Only U.L.-listed appliances are acceptable. Frequent removal of plugs from electrical outlets reduces the life expectancy of the cord. Appliances should have power switches so that the plugs do not need to be removed to shut off power. Refrigerators, coffee pots, hot plates, microwaves, etc, are only allowed in kitchen/break room areas. Portable space heaters are **NOT** allowed on campus.

Office Equipment

Office equipment should not be placed near the edge of tables or desks. Heavy equipment, including computers and monitors, should be secured to prevent it from falling over. Heavy or awkward loads should be moved by at least two individuals. Don't attempt to move furniture alone. Use stepstools or stepladders instead of chairs to reach high shelves. Electrical appliances, including paper shredders and electric typewriters, need to be grounded or double insulated.

Report a Safety Concern

All safety concerns or identified hazards should be reported immediately to your supervisor or Safety and Risk Services so that appropriate measures can be taken. Please contact Michaux Burchard, Safety Coordinator, at 408-924-2155 for assistance.