FAST FACTS

OFFICE SAFETY

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Did you know that **slips, trips and falls** are the most common cause of injury in office environments. So what can we do to reduce the number of incidents occurring?

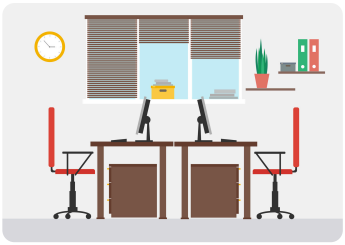
Housekeeping - stay clutter-free! Items placed on floors (boxes, files, personal items e.g. handbags) can become trip hazards and /or block fire exits.

Storage - avoid high-level storage! Ensure that items are stored or rearranged to have the most frequently used items accessible at waist level. Never stand on chairs (especially chairs on castors), desks, or other furnishings/equipment. Use a kick stool or appropriate stepladder. Ensure the stepladder is on stable ground; it is fully opened, footed, as appropriate, and never climb too high or overreach. For more information click on the Working at Height Fast Fact.

Filing Cabinets - close the drawer! Filing cabinets should only allow one drawer to open at a time to prevent them from toppling over. Pedestal-type filing drawers and desk drawers can also become trip hazards if left in walkways.

Floor Surfaces - are they a hazard? All surfaces should be suitable, kept clean, and in good condition/repair. Any damage should be repaired or floor covering replaced particularly on staircases. A documented process should be in place to keep surfaces that may become slippery during wet weather conditions or when cleaning, safe.

Other Hazards to consider in an Office Environment



Ergonomics - all HSE employees and managers of employees who habitually use Display Screen Equipment (DSE) as a significant part of their normal work (if the employee normally uses the DSE for continuous period of more than one hour per day) must undertake the e-learning training module *"Using your Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Workstation Safely"* on HSeLanD. once completed they can apply the learnings to their workstation setup.

For DSE Assessors specific training is available, for more information click here. A DSE risk assessment must be completed with the employee and ensure remedial actions are implemented.

Manual Handling - can lead to unnecessary or awkward manual handling movements. Manual handling risk assessments should be completed to identify control measures and should training be required, employees have a responsibility to attend.

Office Equipment - all DSE employees should be provided with sufficient training, and implement the learnings from this training to ensure they can use equipment safely. You can access this training on HSeLanD - Using your Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Workstation Safely.

Emergency Plans - all employees must be aware of emergency plans e.g. fire, chemical spills, and first aid.

Lighting - sufficient natural and/or artificial lighting should be provided to show obvious hazards and avoid eyestrain.

Thermal Comfort - although there is no absolute temperature for an office setting, a guideline temperature for office work is a range between 18°C to 24°C maintained at every workstation after the first hours of work. A minimal office temperature for sedentary office work is 17.5°C. Temperatures can be controlled by opening windows, using blinds and local heating controls.

Space - employees need sufficient space to move about the work area and access their workstations safely. The guideline minimum space requirement for every staff member occupying an office is 4.65m². This includes the area occupied by the office desk and chair but excludes the filing cabinets and other office furniture.

To check if your work environment is safe, please complete the Office Safety Checklist in addition to the required DSE risk assessments for DSE users. These documents can be accessed on our Health & Safety webpages or you can contact the National Health & Safety Function's helpdesk on **1800 420 420**, Monday to Friday 10.30 am - 12:00 noon & 2 pm - 3.30 pm.