3. Office Safety and Housekeeping

Typical office hazards include slips, trips and falls, cuts, punctures, electrical shock, improper illumination, fire, poor ventilation and unstable file cabinets. The biggest office hazard, however, is the belief that there are no hazards.

3.1 Safety Rules for Office Safety and Housekeeping

SR 3.1.1 Employee lockers, cloakrooms, supply rooms, and hallways are not to be used for storing flammable material or liquids.

SR 3.1.2 Mechanical guards on office equipment shall not be removed except for maintenance and shall be replaced before the equipment is returned to operation.

SR 3.1.3 All electric fans shall be equipped with guards completely enclosing the blades. Guards shall have openings no greater than one-half inch.

SR 3.1.4 All electric space heaters must have a grounded plug, thermostat, tip-over shut off protection and never be plugged into an extension cord.

SR 3.1.5 Extension cords can only be used for temporary wiring. Extension cords are not to be used to energize surge protectors from outlets. Surge protectors need to be directly connected to a permanently installed branch circuit receptacle; they are not to be series connected (daisy-chained or piggy-backed) to other surge protectors.

3.2 Safety Procedures to Reduce Accidents

3.2.1 Aisles shall be kept free of obstructions and debris.

3.2.2 To eliminate the possibility of a file cabinet being pulled over, heavier materials shall be stored in the lower drawers and only one drawer shall be opened at a time. All drawers shall be closed when not in use.

3.2.3 Desks should be arranged to eliminate tripping hazards caused by floor-mounted electrical and telephone outlets.

3.2.4 Employees shall be aware of the location of fire extinguishers in their areas and familiar with the instruction for usage printed on each extinguisher.

3.2.5 Doors which serve two-way pedestrian traffic should be used with care to avoid striking personnel approaching from the opposite direction.
3.2.6 Broken glass, razor blades and other sharp-edged materials shall not be placed in wastebaskets.

3.2.7 Office furniture shall be kept in good repair to eliminate potential injuries.

3.2.8 Never use chairs, desks or other office furniture as a make-shift ladder. Use a step ladder. Do not over-reach and lose your balance.

3.2.9 Message spindles are a frequent source of puncture wounds to hands and other parts of the body. When used, the point shall be protected by a suitable blunt cover or preferably the point should be bent at a horizontal angle.

3.2.10 Keep the blades of paper cutter closed when not in use.

3.2.11 Keep work areas and storage facilities clean, neat and orderly.

3.2.12 Do not place supplies on top of lockers, hampers, boxes or other moveable containers at a height where they are not visible from the floor.

3.2.13 Do not let soft drink bottles, soiled clothes, etc., accumulate in lockers and work places.

3.2.14 Tools, equipment, machinery and work areas are to be maintained in a clean and safe manner. Defects and unsafe conditions shall be reported to your supervisor.

3.2.15 Return tools and equipment to their proper place when not in use.

3.2.16 Clean up spills immediately to avoid slipping hazards. In the event the removal cannot be done immediately, the area must be appropriately guarded, signed or roped off. Snow shall be removed from all access sidewalks and exterior stairs to buildings as soon as practical. In the event the snow cannot be readily removed from traffic areas, it shall be sanded or the area roped off.

3.2.17 Remove caked ice/snow from shoes prior to entering building.

3.2.18 Nail points, ends of loop or tie wires, etc., must not be left exposed when packing and unpacking boxes, crates, barrels, etc. Nails are to be removed as soon as lumber is disassembled.

3.2.19 Sharp or pointed articles should be stored so as to prevent persons from coming in contact with the sharp edges or points.

3.2.20 All packing materials should be properly disposed of to prevent fires.

3.2.21 Wastebaskets are to be emptied into approved containers.
3.2.22 Oily and greasy rags shall be put into a metal container designated for that purpose.

3.2.23 Adequate lighting in obscure areas shall be secured for the protection of both employees and the public. Do not enter or pass through a room or hallway without proper lighting even if you think you are familiar with the surroundings.

3.2.24 Control or circuit breaker boxes should be easily accessible and the boxes closed at all times, clear of coats, rags and other debris.