# COMMON OFFICE SAFETY HAZARDS

To address any electrical, structural, and/or design safety issue within your immediate office space or outside of the space including hallways, common areas, stairwells, etc., please notify the AOC, landlord, or building maintenance staff.



## **ELECTRICAL:**

• Power cords, plugs, and electrical outlets must not be damaged or frayed.

• Three-prong plugs must have their ground prong in place.

• All electrical wires must be covered leaving no bare wires exposed.

• Outlets near wet surface areas such as bathrooms or kitchens must have functioning Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI). *See picture below.* 

• Test GFCI outlets periodically using the test button. Reset the unit by pushing the reset button. See <u>video tutorial</u>.



Example of GFCI

• Modular furniture with electrical outlets must have covers over all wires.

• Extension cords cannot be used to make permanent wiring connections.

• All power strips are to be plugged directly into outlets and not "daisy-chained" (plugged in a series). • Plug appliances directly into grounded outlets, appropriately-sized for power supply.

• There should be a 36" clearance in front of all electrical panels.

• Electrical equipment and appliances must be approved by a Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory.

• Electrical panel doors must be closed. If open, DO NOT APPROACH. Immediately notify appropriate party (AOC/ landlord/ maintenance staff).

## **CHEMICAL SAFETY:**

• Safety Data Sheets (SDS) must be available for all hazardous chemicals located in the workplace.

• Chemical containers must be properly labeled and kept closed when not in use.

• Follow label or SDS instructions for all chemicals used in the workplace.

#### **EMERGENCY RESPONSE:**

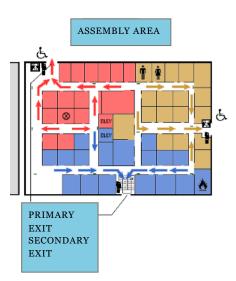
• Emergency Action Plans must be in place and all employees must be trained on the plan. This includes an up-to-date emergency telephone list, including first responders.

• Emergency duties should be assigned to employees according to the office's Emergency Action Plan.

• Employees must know where to go when required to evacuate the building or "shelter in place."

• Exit routes must be adequate, i.e., 18" for a single person and 28" or more for multiple persons.

• Each office must have enough exit routes to enable employees to evacuate safely.



Evacuation Map

- Exit doors designated as emergency exits cannot be obstructed. Aisles, stairways, and hallways must be kept clear of obstructions that could block egress and exit from the building.
- All areas must have functional emergency lighting.
- Exit signs must be working and visible in all conditions and locations.
- Office annunciators must be working properly, kept charged, and reset after each emergency.



Immediately report any malfunctioning alarms and/or office annunciators to the appropriate entity.

• First Aid supplies should be available in the absence of a closeby infirmary, clinic, or hospital. If you elect to have a kit, contents must be up to date.



## **ENVIRONMENTAL:**

• Keep workplaces free from clutter and debris that could cause fire, rodent, or vector problems (i.e., certain insects that transmit disease).

• Floors should be clean, dry, and free from tripping hazards.

• Lighting should be adequate to allow employees to see their work without eye strain.

• Properly identify areas containing asbestos and properly maintain surfaces to minimize fiber releases.

#### **MACHINE GUARDING:**

• Portable fans must have fan-blade guard openings of .5 inch diameter or less.

• Paper cutters must have a finger guard in front of the blade arm, and blade arm tension must be adjusted to prevent free fall.

## **SLIPS, TRIPS, FALLS:**

• Rungs and feet of portable ladders and steps of stools should be supplied with non-slip material.

• Cords, wires, and cables must not be run across aisles, walkways, or exit route pathways.

• Carpets and rugs must be secured and in good condition.

- Practice good housekeeping by cleaning up spills.
- Stairways should have non-slip treads and proper lighting.

• Keep walking surfaces dry during inclement weather.

## **MATERIAL STORAGE:**

• Secure materials stored on overhead racks and ensure that racks are attached to walls.

• Heaviest items should be loaded in the bottom of file drawers to prevent the cabinet from tipping.

• Drawers of file cabinets should not be left standing open.

• Secure heavy items on top of shelves.

• Have step stools or ladders available to reach high places.

#### FIRE:

• Make sure that items are stored no closer than 18" under sprinkler heads.

• Ensure that fire extinguishers within your office space are fully charged, have monthly and annual tags affixed, and are not damaged. Contact the appropriate entity to correct issues.

• Fire extinguishers, pull stations, exit signs, and strobe lights must be visible and accessible.

• Store combustible materials away from ignition sources, exit stairwells, and electrical closets.

• All ceiling tiles are to be intact.

• Plug space heaters directly into outlets and ensure that they are equipped with tip-over switches.



• Cords and wires should be protected from damage and pinch points and not run through ceilings, doorways, walls, or other openings, or under rugs or chair mats.

• Fire doors must not be blocked, locked, or obstructed, and must be free from flammable materials such as posters and fliers.

- Use flame retardant draperies.
- Fire doors must be working properly and close securely.
- All fire wall penetrations must be sealed.
- All stairways, corridors, and exits must be clear of obstructions.
- Fire sprinklers are to be in good condition and free from corrosion.

## **WORKPLACE:**

• "Your Rights in the Congressional Workplace" poster must be placed in a conspicuous location where employee notices are typically posted.



## NEED HELP WITH AN ISSUE?

Contact: House Service Center at 202-225-4141 or Senate Service Center at 202-224-3141

For more information on workplace safety under the Congressional Accountability Act, call 202-724-9250 or visit <u>ocwr.gov</u>

Compliance with the standards referenced in this publication does not necessarily ensure compliance with all standards established under the Occupational Safety and Health Act.