# Safety Matters

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# Stay Safe in the Office

## Watch for these dangers

The office may seem like a quiet, safe place, but any number of injuries can be sustained there.

You might already know that if you open the top drawers of a four-drawer file cabinet and leave them open, the whole thing could topple down on you.

Slips, trips and falls are the most common office accidents. Slips are caused by liquids spilled on the floor, rain and snow brought in from the outside or pieces of trash that are not placed in the trash can. Trips are often the result of something left in or extending into a walkway; trips can also result from someone simply not paying attention to their surroundings. Both slips and trips can result in a fall.

Use caution in a hallway. Be careful of your surroundings and watch where you are going so you don't run into someone. Don't use your cell phone, read a report or do anything else which distracts you. Don't run. When you take the stairs, use the handrail.

Back injuries often happen when one person lifts, or attempts to lift, a heavy piece of equipment or a carton of supplies. Always get help to move heavy materials. To lift a moderately heavy object by yourself, squat, hold the item securely and then straighten your legs as you rise. Test the weight of any item before lifting it.

Office equipment can cause serious shock and burn injuries if not properly used. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions. Never remove the third prong from the three-prong plug of any piece of equipment. If you must temporarily use an extension cord across a walkway, tape it down. Extension cords should never be used as a permanent source of electricity for office equipment. Be careful to not overload electrical outlets or extension cords as the electrical overload may result in a fire.

When a building is undergoing construction, alterations or renovations, keep your distance from the project. Obey all warning signs and construction safety guidelines regarding Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

If you occasionally work late at night in a large building, a time when everyone else has left, call security and ask to be escorted through the building and to your car. If there is no security then be sure to contact a family member or friend, let them know you are leaving, the route you are taking, and the expected time of arrival. Keep alert to your surroundings and the environment.

### SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

**Tin can + Matches + Candle + Paper Cup + Snow = Drinking water**

Yes, you read the equation right. Before going on the road, you better prepare a tin can, candle, paper cup, and some matches. Should you get stuck in the middle of the road and run short on water, you can always melt some snow with the supplies above as part of your emergency kit.

## *News & Notes*

### FIRST AID FOR CUTS AND SCRAPES

Minor cuts and scrapes are a common job hazard. Gloves help, but if you get a cut or scrape on the job, follow these tips from the American Medical Association:

- **Don't put your mouth over the wound** or breathe on it—this just gives germs a chance to infect it.
- **Don't allow dirty fingers** or any soiled material, such as a rag or used tissue, to touch the wound.
- **Clean the area immediately** with soap and water, wiping away from the wound.
- **Hold a sterile pad** or clean paper towel firmly **over the wound** to stop the bleeding, then bandage.
- **Keep the wound covered** for a few days, and change the bandage as necessary to keep it clean.

### HOW LONG DOES SAFETY TAKE?

How long does it take to put on personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect against safety hazards? **A minute or two?** Maybe less?

How long does it take to check a safety procedure in a manual or ask your supervisor if you're not sure about a hazard or how to do a job safely? **A few minutes?**

How much time does it take to check a material safety data sheet (MSDS) for vital information about a chemical? **5 or 10 minutes?**

Even if doing the safe thing takes a little longer, it's worth it. It means you get to go home to your family and friends uninjured and in one piece at the end of your shift—instead of to the hospital.

"Just chillin'. What are you up to?"

### RIDDLE OF THE MONTH

How could you rearrange the letters in the words "new door" to make one word? There is only one correct response.

**Answers on page 2 Safety Bits & Pieces**

# *Safety Bits & Pieces*

### SEVEN SMART MOVES

Here are seven smart ways to prevent accidents and injuries on the job:

1. **Learn how to do your job safely,** and then do everything you can to make sure you keep safe while you work.
2. **Think the job through.** Know what you're going to do and how you're going to do it.
3. **When in doubt, find out.** There are no stupid safety questions. Ask if you don't understand something.
4. **Get help when you need it.** Don't struggle with something too big to handle safely or be too proud to ask a co-worker to lend a hand. You can return the favor when a co-worker needs help.
5. **Use required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).** Find out what to wear, how to wear it, and how to maintain it so it keeps protecting you.
6. **Speak up** and tell your supervisor if you see anything unsafe that may hurt you or someone else.
7. **Report accidents and injuries.** It's important to find out what went wrong so that the problem can be corrected.

### DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE LIKE THIS?

Do you know someone who says things like:

☹ "It won't happen to me."
☹ "Accidents? What can you do? It's just the cost of doing business."
☹ "Real men (women) don't need PPE. That stuff is for wimps."
☹ "Safety rules? I make my own rules."
☹ "Let me show you a shortcut."
☹ "That machine guard is just slowing us down. Let's take it off."

The individual who says these things is an accident waiting to happen. Or more likely has already caused numerous accidents and been responsible for getting more than one co-worker injured.

You want to be careful around individuals like this. But if you really want to help them - and make your work area safer - you'll get together with other safety-minded co-workers and have a little talk with the person.

Tell them you're worried about their safety—and your own. Convince them it's time to start taking safety seriously. If that doesn't work, maybe you'll need to involve your supervisor. No one has the right to carelessly endanger their co-workers.

### RIDDLE OF THE MONTH ANSWER

"One word"

# Be Aware, Be Safe

## Do your part to make the workplace safe

Many accidents happen because people are not aware of hazards, not paying attention while they work, or not thinking that safety is important in their job.

All of the safety training, safety programs and rules, and personal protective equipment in the world can't protect you if you don't look out for yourself.

Being aware of safety means always having the right information to do the job safely—and asking if you don't know. It also means taking the time before you start working to identify potential hazards and take the proper precautions to protect yourself. And it means following safety procedures and focusing your full attention on the job the whole time you're working.

One of your most important safety responsibilities is simply to be aware of the need for taking proper safety precautions. Here's what to do:

- ⇨ Take the time to look for and identify hazards—and do something about them. Never assume that someone else will take care of it.
- ⇨ Examine the substances, equipment, and situations that are part of the job.
- ⇨ Look for unsafe acts as well as unsafe conditions.
- ⇨ Be alert to anything that simply doesn't look, smell, or "feel" right.

### ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

"If you think it will help, yeah, let's hear your spin."

### QUOTATION OF THE MONTH

"The best thing to give your enemy is forgiveness; to an opponent, tolerance; to a friend, your heart; to your child, a good example; to a father, deference; to your mother, conduct that will make her proud of you; to yourself, respect; to all others, charity."
Benjamin Franklin (1706 - 1790)
Founding Father of the United States

## From the State of Delaware's Office of Highway Safety...

### Resolve to Drive Safe

It's the start of a brand new year. What a great time to wipe the slate clean! If you have picked up poor driving habits over the last year, now is the time to change them! The good news is that every time you get behind the wheel is a time to recommit to safety. How? Follow these simple steps:

- **Buckle Up.** Yes, buckle up. Every single time you get in the car. And make sure that your passengers are buckled up, too. If you are unsure if your child seat is the proper size for your child or if you are unsure if it is installed correctly, now is a great time to call our Fitting Stations. Best of all, it is completely free!
- **Slow Down.** You will get where you need to be whether you speed and drive aggressively, or whether you drive calmly and in control. Remember to obey the posted traffic signs, and be thoughtful of other drivers.
- **Limit Distractions**. Before you even pull out of your parking spot, put your mobile device away. Driving is not the time to browse the web, text, or check your email. If you must stay connected while you are on the road, use a hands free device. Keep your hands on the wheel and your mind on the road. It could save your life.
- **Always Designate a Sober Driver.** Every time you are going out and intend to drink alcohol, designate someone who will get you home safely. It could be a family member, friend, or public transportation … anyone who has chosen not to drink at all.

You can find more information about these topics at www.ohs.delaware.gov. From all of us here at the Delaware Office of Highway Safety, Have a Happy, Safe, and Prosperous New Year. **Drive Safe. Arrive Alive DE.**