# Avoiding office injuries

It's easy to take safety in an office environment for granted. After all, most offices don't have the obvious hazards you find on a construction site or in a factory. But the average office can be dangerous, too — especially when no one considers safety.

## Below is a review of some of the situations that increase exposure to injury and how to avoid them.

- **Avoid walking and reading at the same time.** If it is important enough to read, then stop and read it.
- **Never leave file cabinets open and unattended, not even for a minute.** How long does it really take to close a file cabinet?
- **Never run in the office.** Nothing is so important that you must risk running into a coworker.
- **Leave your shoes on.** If your shoes are too uncomfortable to wear all day, wear different shoes.  Running around the office barefoot is a sure way to stub a toe or pick up a staple.
- **When you must carry files, don't carry more than you are capable of.** If you're grunting or your muscles get tired, you're carrying too much. Use a cart or make more trips.
- **Avoid placing extension cords on the floor.** These are tripping hazards and can also become fire hazards.
- **Never put your fingers in an automatic stapler or stamper.** Always unplug it before you try to unjam it.
- **Always keep aisles clear.** Never stack boxes or supplies in aisles or in front of egress paths. Never arrange offices with desks in front of exits.
- **Avoid bending at the waist to reach low files.** If you must reach low files, either stoop down or get on your knees.
- **Avoid twisting and reaching for files or other materials in your work station.** Move your whole body to prevent back strain.

## Office safety hot spots:

- Exposed or poorly covered extension cords
- Heavy, bulky files
- Open, unattended filing cabinets
- Blocked or cluttered hallways

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