

How to Work Safely in the Office

Editor's note: Our Tailgate Training Tip Sheets are [available in Spanish at www.gemplers.com](http://www.gemplers.com).

KEY POINTS:

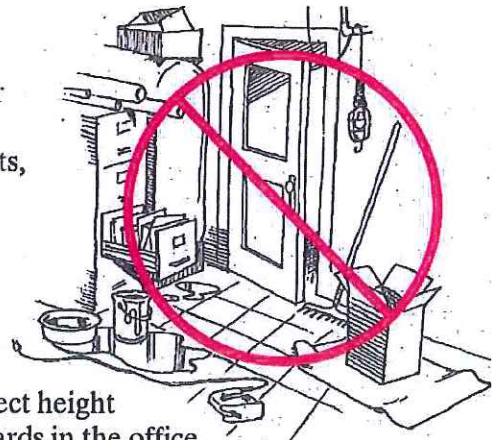
- Be on the lookout for such hazards as overloaded electrical outlets, blocked aisles, and slippery floors.
- Keep your work area clean, and turn off equipment at the end of the day.
- Immediately report any hazards you can't fix yourself to your supervisor.

Note to trainer: Follow this script or use it to help guide you through a 10- to 15-minute tailgate training session for your ag/hort workers. You may photocopy this sheet for your employees' personal use. However, it may not be published or sold.



Offices have many hazards

- Working in an office may not seem like an unsafe job.
- But offices have many potential hazards that can affect your safety or your health. These include:
 - electrical hazards, such as frayed cords, overloaded outlets, or cords that lay across the floor
 - obstacles left on the floor or in aisles
 - open file drawers
 - wet, slippery floors
 - loose or torn carpeting
 - inadequate lighting
 - dirty computer screen, or a keyboard that is at the incorrect height
- It's important that you constantly be on the lookout for hazards in the office. If you can't correct them yourself, immediately report them to your supervisor.



Practice good housekeeping

- Another important action you can take is to always practice good housekeeping. This includes:
 - closing cabinet, desk and file drawers
 - keeping floors and walkways clear by putting away empty boxes, packing material, and any other potential hazards
 - making sure all trash is properly disposed of in [trash containers](#)
 - immediately cleaning up spills (*Note: Immediately notify your supervisor if there is a [chemical spill](#).*)
 - not laying cords or cables across doorways or walkways
 - turning off computers and other equipment when not in use
 - not storing boxes or other items on stairs
 - not piling items too high on shelves
 - constantly being on the lookout for such hazards as broken, slippery or cluttered stairs; damaged electric cords; [unsecured rugs](#); loose or torn carpeting; missing floor tiles; uneven surfaces; or holes or cracks in the flooring that's in need of repair.



(Continued on back)

See our [full line of safety supplies](#), including [respirators](#), [eye](#) and [ear protection](#), [coveralls](#), [first aid](#) and more.

How to Work Safely in the Office

Safely working at your desk

- Paying close attention to how you work at your desk can prevent potential problems such as eyestrain or a sore back.
- Here are a few tips for working safely at a computer:
 - Sit comfortably upright, keeping your shoulders relaxed, your elbows close to your body, and your feet flat on the floor.
 - Make sure your keyboard is at elbow height or slightly lower and that your chair is adjusted to the right height.
 - Keep your forearms, **wrists** and hands in a straight line when using the keyboard. The top of the monitor screen should be slightly below eye level.
 - Keep the monitor at least 20 inches away from your eyes.
 - Use a **holder** for documents. Place it as close to the screen as possible and at the same height and distance.
 - Take breaks from the computer. Get up and move around.
 - Blink your eyes several times if they begin feeling dry.
- Whether or not you work at a computer, it's important to sit comfortably at your desk but not slouch; hold the telephone to your ear, rather than propping it between your head and shoulders; hold your pen or pencil lightly, keeping your fingers relaxed; and use your breaks to get up, walk around, and exercise your muscles.



More office safety tips

- Try to relax and set a reasonable pace for your activities.
- Change positions frequently while you work and rotate job tasks.
- Walk, don't run. Being in too much of a hurry can result in serious injury.
- Pay attention to where you're going, especially around stairs and doorways.
- Don't take shortcuts. Shortcuts can lead to accidents.
- Only smoke in designated smoking areas.
- Use a **ladder** to reach items in high places.
- Never use electrical equipment when your hands are wet.
- Don't carry more than you can handle, and practice proper lifting techniques.



Are there any questions?

Note to trainer: Take time to answer trainees' questions. Then review the Office Safety Do's and Don'ts.

OFFICE SAFETY DO'S AND DON'TS

DO:

- Keep cabinet, desk and file drawers closed when not in use.
- Know where all exits and fire extinguishers are located.
- Make sure you have adequate lighting at the computer, and remember to take breaks.

DON'T:

- Run or be in too much of a hurry.
- Ignore electrical hazards such as overloaded outlets or frayed cords.
- Forget to change positions frequently while you work.

See our [full line of safety supplies](#), including [respirators](#), [eye](#) and [ear protection](#), [coveralls](#), [first aid](#) and more.