

SAFE WORK PRACTICES for ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Contra Costa County Schools Insurance Group
Workers' Compensation/Health & Safety Services & Health Benefits Program Provider



Keep work area free of trip hazards and use caution when working on the computer or doing tasks in the office.



SAFETY AT THE CENTER OF IT ALL

School and district administrative and office staff juggle many tasks to keep schools running. Whether you produce yearly reports, manage enrollment, or help a child who is not feeling well, you play a vital role. By taking care of your own health and safety at work, you avoid injuries that could mean time away from work.

Did You Know?

- The most common office injury in schools is from slipping, tripping and falling. These injuries can be caused by slippery or uneven walking surfaces, cluttered walkways or open file drawers.

Keep yourself safe and healthy on the job by following the tips in this flyer on how to identify and avoid potential hazards.

SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS

- Walk, do not run, especially when carrying materials.
- Report worn/warped chair mats, floor mats and runners to supervisor.
- Do not lean or tilt back in chair.
- Use tread guards across walkways if it is not possible to re-route cords.
- Use ladder or step stool to reach high items. Never stand on chairs or desks.
- Never use a broken ladder or step stool.
- Keep all walkways clear of clutter.
- Make sure shelves and storage racks are stable and secured.
- Wear closed-toe, rubber-soled shoes with no heel (or low block heel).

ERGONOMIC

- Do not place stacks of boxes, papers or other heavy objects on top of file cabinets, desks or window ledges.
- Call custodian or maintenance staff to assist in rearranging furniture, moving desks, file cabinets or other heavy items.
- When lifting, keep load close to body, squat and lift with legs; keep back straight and do not twist.
- Avoid moving supplies or equipment without assistance.

STRUCK BY FALLING OBJECTS/CAUGHT IN OR BETWEEN

- Open only one file drawer at a time.
- Do not place office equipment near edge of desk or table.
- Use non-slip pads with machines that tend to "creep" during operation.
- Do not pull file/desk drawer past safety stop.
- When storing materials, the heaviest items should be stored closest to the floor and the lightweight items stored in the higher locations.

SHARP OBJECTS

- Paper cutter should be provided with finger guard.
- Do not leave knives or scissors on desk with point toward you.
- Thumb tacks, razor blades, and other sharp objects should not be stored loose in drawers.
- Do not place glass objects (flower pots, vases, bottles, etc.) near edge of desk, tables or file cabinets.

FIRE

- Do not run electric cords under rugs.
- Individual heaters at work stations should be kept clear of combustible materials such as drapes, paper or trash from waste baskets. Heaters must be equipped with tip-over switches and should be unplugged at the end of each work day.

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REPETITIVE MOTION INJURIES

- Keyboard should be positioned so wrists and hands are straight.
- Adjust backrest of chair to maintain natural curve of lower back (a lower back pad, such as a pillow or rolled up towel can be used).
- Periodically perform exercises designed to relax muscle tension/stiffness, stress and general fatigue.
- If possible, alternate different tasks throughout the day.
- Be aware of the early warning symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome:
 - Undue fatigue in hands;
 - Tingling in fingers especially in thumb and first two fingers;
 - Aching in wrists and hands
 - Hands falling asleep at night;
 - Difficulty in handling small objects;
 - Loss of feeling in fingertips.
- When you work on a computer:
 - Position the chair and desk so that your knees and forearms are at 90 degree angles, with wrists straight and feet flat on the floor or on a footrest.
 - The top of your screen should be at or just below eye level, and 16-22 inches away.
 - Keep materials you need close by.
 - Take a brief stretch break each hour.

OTHER

- Wash your hands frequently.
- Report water leaks or signs of dampness right away.
- If you come into contact with blood or other bodily fluids:
 - Wear disposable gloves
 - Wash your hands with soap and water
 - Disinfect any equipment or work areas that are affected

CHEMICALS

- If you use any cleaning supplies, follow safety precautions on the label.
- Ventilate the area as well as possible.
- Make sure all chemicals are labeled and that you have a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for each product.



INJURY PREVENTION THROUGH PHYSICAL CONDITIONING

Three Easy Steps (5-10 min. total!)



WARMING YOUR BODY

This involves gradually increasing your heart rate, body temperature and breathing rate. The main purposes of warming up are to raise both the general body and deep muscle temperatures and to stretch connective tissues to permit greater flexibility. This reduces the possibility of muscle tears and ligament sprains.

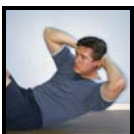
STRETCHING YOUR MUSCLES

Stretching permits a greater range of movement within the joint, the ligaments and other connective tissue are not so easily strained or torn. It also permits greater freedom of movement in all directions.



DEVELOPING YOUR CORE

The "core" is the torso, extending from the shoulders to the pelvis. It is the body's center of power. Training the muscles of the core will help correct postural imbalances, prevent injuries and develop efficient, functional movement patterns.



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