



CODES OF SAFE PRACTICES - **CLERICAL**

General Office Safety Rules

The office environment is generally considered to be a safe one, and office workers tend to be complacent about their safety since there are no obvious safety hazards. It is this complacency that can lead to unsafe work practices and eventually injuries.

- A. **Be aware of where you are walking.** Trip and slip hazards - stacks of paper or boxes in the aisle, for example, or recently polished and slick floors are common in the office.
- B. **Be aware of the location of the nearest fire extinguisher.** It may come in handy. Read the instructions on the extinguisher now, before you need to use it.
- C. **Familiarize yourself with the emergency exit procedures.** Learn the general layout of the office and the location of the nearest exit in case you have to get out of the building in a hurry.
- D. **Chairs are not step stools.** Don't use them for that purpose. Use a step stool or ladder when reaching for elevated supplies and materials.
- E. **Keep it neat.** Avoid clutter both on the desktop and underneath the desk. Keep your workstation and the area around it orderly.

Office Ergonomic Safety Rules

Repetitive Motion Injuries (RMI) are the most prevalent injuries among those who spend most of their day at a desk working with computers, and office workers should take the following steps to reduce the chance of such an injury.

- A. **Complete a workstation ergonomic evaluation.** If available, utilize an in-house resource to complete the evaluation or complete a self-evaluation (checklist attached).
- B. **Make the necessary adjustments to your chair.** Most chairs will have at least two or three adjustment levers to use to change the height and tilts of the seat and backrest. Adjust the chair so you can achieve the most comfortable typing position.
- C. **Take the weight on your feet.** Ensure that your feet rest on the ground so that not all the weight is on your lower back. If your feet do not reach the ground, utilize a footrest.
- D. **Type with your wrist at a neutral position.** Adjust the height of chair and keyboard to ensure that, while typing, the shoulders are relaxed, there is a 90-degree angle at the elbow, and the wrist is in a flat position (i.e. no raising or lowering of the wrist from the forearm in order to reach the keys).
- E. **Avoid neck and eye strain.** Position the monitor directly in front of you at a distance with its top at eye level. Keep the monitor between 18" and 24" from the eye, and place it at right angle to the window. If you are entering data from a document, prop the document up or, better still, place it at eye level with the use of a document holder.
- F. **Keep the mouse close.** Avoid having to reach either up or out to use the mouse. If possible it should be kept next to and at the same height as the keyboard. Hold the mouse gently and move it with the arm rather than the wrist.

- G. **Take your breaks.** Take micro-breaks from typing for 2-3 minutes every half-hour and stop typing for ten minutes after typing uninterrupted for 2 hours. If possible, get outside during breaks for some valuable fresh air and, during the day, regularly stretch the hands, arms and back.

Office Equipment Safety Rules

- A. **Electric Powered Equipment can be a shock hazard.** Periodically, check the equipment for frayed cords and defective plugs. Never clean or service electric powered equipment with the power on; always disconnect the equipment from the power source. Don't use the equipment with wet hands or while on a damp floor.
- B. **Be careful with paper cutters.** Cutters should only be used on a level, unobstructed and clear surface. The finger guard must be in place before using the cutter. The lever should be put down and in the locked position when it is not being used.
- C. **Photocopy machines could be harmful to the eyes.** These machines emit an extremely bright light. Always make sure the machine cover is down when operating it.
- D. **Close file cabinet and desk drawers when not in use.** File cabinets are unstable with the drawers open and a co-worker could walk into an open drawer.

Storeroom Safety Rules

- A. **Store your equipment safely.** Everything should have its place in the storeroom. Avoid placing old boxes and files in there on a permanent basis and keep clutter to a minimum. A neat clean storeroom can greatly reduce the chance of accidents.
- B. **Weight can be a safety hazard.** Heavier items should be stored on the lower shelves at about chest height or lower. Be careful not to overload shelves.

Lifting Rules

It is just as important to keep your body in shape for the task as it is any other tool you use for other jobs. You can injure yourself just as easily lifting light objects as you can lifting heavier ones if you don't lift properly and your "tool" is not in shape for the job. Lifting is a thinking person's job.

- A. **Before you lift something, prepare yourself and plan the move.** Make sure you are limber and physically fit enough to do the task safely. Daily exercises will keep your body ready for lifting and help you feel better. Size up the load to make sure you can handle it safely. If you think the load is too bulky or too heavy, ask someone to help you or try to break it up into smaller, more manageable loads. Use a hand truck or dolly if necessary. Plan your route and make sure the path is clear of trip, slip, and fall hazards.
- B. **Use proper body mechanics when lifting.** Stand close to the object with your feet about shoulder width apart. Squat down, bending at the hips and knees. Keep your back straight. As you grip the load, arch your lower back inward by pulling your shoulders back and sticking your chest out with chin tucked in. Be sure to keep the load close to your body. When you set the load down, squat down, bending at the hips and knees, keeping your lower back arched in.
- C. **Turn, don't twist.** Twisting is not the thing to do. Instead of twisting, turn your whole body in the direction that you want to go. Twisting when carrying a load puts a lot of undo stress on your back.
- D. **Push, don't pull.** Whenever you have to move something that's on a cart, a dolly, or a hand truck, push the load. Pushing puts less strain on your back.

- E. **Don't store heavy objects higher than your waist.** If heavy objects aren't stored higher than your waist than you won't have to lift them higher than your waist. Lifting objects overhead puts a lot of undue stress on your back. It's one of the surest ways to injure your back.

- F. **Lift like a pro and avoid the pain.** Learning how to lift and carry safely is one of the most important things you can do for your back. It's not hard to put these suggestions to use, and the payoffs will be well worth the time and effort you put into it.

OFFICE WORKSTATION EVALUATION

Date: _____ **Evaluator:** _____
Employee Name: _____ **Title:** _____
Location: _____ **Department:** _____
Reason: _____ **Hours a day at VDT:** _____

CHAIR

| | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Do you know how to make adjustments to your chair position? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are you sitting at a height you find comfortable? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are your feet resting on the floor? (If not, is there a footrest available?) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is your backrest at an angle and height that provides optimum lumbar support? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you use the backrest while typing (i.e., no tilting forward)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are your thighs parallel to the floor or better still, sloping down slightly? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is there pressure on the back of your knees? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are your armrests used just for rest periods, and not while typing? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Comments/Adjustments/Equipment Needed:

KEYBOARD

| | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| While typing, are your upper arms within contact of your torso? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are your shoulders relaxed? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are your forearms parallel to the floor (i.e., 90° angle at the elbow)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are your wrists and hands straight and in-line with your forearm? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are your wrists rests used just for rest periods, and not while typing? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Comments/Adjustments/Equipment Needed:

MONITOR

| | Yes | No |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Is the top of your monitor at or slightly below eye level? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is your monitor between 18 and 24 inches from your eyes? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is your monitor directly behind your keyboard? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is your monitor clean and free of glare? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is your monitor at right angles to any windows? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you use a document holder when appropriate? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Comments/Adjustments/Equipment Needed:

KEYING/MOUSE TECHNIQUE

| | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Do you use a light keying touch? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you move your arms, not your wrists when reaching for distant keys? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do your hands and wrists "float" over the keys? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you use the numeric pad for cursor control? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you use keystroke alternatives instead of the mouse whenever possible? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you hold your mouse gently (instead of the death grip)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you move your mouse with your arm rather than your wrist? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is your mouse as close to the keyboard as possible? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is your mouse switched periodically to your other hand? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you use a light touch when clicking? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Comments/Adjustments/Equipment Needed:

SCHEDULE/BREAKS/EXERCISE

| | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Have you recently worked more than 8 hours a day for an extended period? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you stop typing for 10 minutes after typing uninterrupted for 2 hours? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you take micro breaks (2-3 minutes) every half-hour? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you vary your posture regularly during the day? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you stand up and walk around during micro breaks? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you regularly stretch (particularly your hands and wrists)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you focus on distant objects at least every 7 minutes? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Comments/Adjustments/Equipment Needed:

DESK ORGANIZATION

| | Yes | No |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Is the floor around your desk cluttered (preventing leg movement)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is your desktop cluttered (resulting in cramped typing positions)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is other needed equipment (e.g., 10-key machine) accessible to you without reaching? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you use a headset if required to use phone while typing? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is there minimal reaching for you above your shoulder and below your waist? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Comments/Adjustments/Equipment Needed:

OTHER

| | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Do you feel informed about the hazards of computer use? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are you knowledgeable about controlling those hazards through correct workstation setup, modifying your schedule, and using better technique? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you know the procedure for reporting physical problems? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Comments/Adjustments/Equipment Needed:
