



Office Safety

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National Health & Safety Function (NHSF)

Slips, trips and falls are the most common cause of injury in office environments. So what can we do to reduce the number of incidents occurring?

1. Housekeeping - stay clutter free! items placed on floors (boxes, files, personal items e.g. handbags) can become tripping hazards and/or block fire exits.
2. Storage - avoid high level storage!, ensure that items are stored or rearranged to have the most frequent items accessible at waist level. Never stand on chairs (especially chairs on castors) desks or other furnishings/equipment. Use a kick stool or appropriate stepladder. Ensure the stepladder is on stable ground; it is fully opened, footed as appropriate and never climb too high or overreach. For more information on [Working at Height Fast Fact](#).
3. Filing Cabinets - close the drawer! Filing cabinets should only allow one drawer to open at a time to prevent them from falling over. Pedestal type filing drawers and desk drawers can also become tripping hazards if left out in walkways.
4. Floor Surfaces - are they a hazard? All surfaces should be suitable and in good repair. Surfaces should be kept clean and in good condition. Any damage should be repaired or floor covering replaced especially on staircases. A documented process should be in place to keep surfaces that may become slippery during wet weather conditions or cleaning safe.



Other Hazards to Consider in the Office Environment Are:

Ergonomics - all HSE employees and the managers of employees who habitually use display screen equipment as a significant part of their normal work (if the employee normally uses the DSE for continuous period of more than one hour per day) must undertake the e-learning training programme "DSE User Awareness" on www.HSEland.ie. For DSE Assessors specific training is available, for more information click [here](#). A DSE [risk assessment](#) must be completed with the employee and ensure remedial actions are implemented.

Manual Handling - can lead to unnecessary or awkward manual handling movements. Manual handling risk assessments should be completed and employees have a responsibility to attend any training provided.



Office Equipment - all employees should be provided with sufficient training, implement the learnings from this training to ensure they can use equipment safely.

Emergency Plans - all employees must be aware of emergency plans for example fire and first aid.

Lighting - sufficient natural and/or artificial lighting should be provided to show up obvious hazards and avoid eyestrain.

Thermal Comfort - although there is no absolute temperature for an office setting, a guideline temperature for office work is 18°C to 23°C maintained at every workstation after the first hour's work. Temperatures can be controlled by opening windows, using blinds and local heating controls.

Space - employees need sufficient space to move about the work area and access their work station safely. The guideline minimum space requirements for staff occupying an office is 4.65m². This includes the area occupied by the office desk and chair. It excludes filing cabinets and other office furniture

To check if your work environment is safe, please complete the office safety checklist in addition to the required DSE risk assessments for DSE users. These documents can be accessed on our [Health & Safety webpages](#) or you can contact us on 1800 420 420, Monday—Friday 10.30-12.00 and 14.00-15.30.