

## Safety Precautions for Office Workers

### RESPONSIBILITY

University personnel are responsible for using safety precautions while in offices. This section provides an overview of common office safety problems and precautions. For detailed information on a given topic refer to cross-referenced sections.

### GENERAL PRECAUTIONS

#### Ergonomics

See *SPPM 2.74*.

#### Lifting Practices

See *SPPM 2.74*.

#### Smoking

See *SPPM 6.10*.

#### Housekeeping

Make sure that wastebaskets are emptied regularly.

Keep aisles, exits, and stairs free of obstructions.

#### Slips and Falls

##### Tripping Hazards

Remove tripping hazards from all walkways. Examples of hazards include briefcases, electric cords, wastebaskets, and fans.

##### Liquid Spills

Immediately clean up liquids spilled in traveled areas.

##### Winter Footwear

During winter months, wear footwear with traction soles when running errands to other buildings, or traveling to and from work.

##### Worn Stair Treads, Broken Floor Tiles, Broken Handrails

Report worn stair treads, broken floor tiles, or broken handrails to the campus facilities services, operations department.

##### *WSU Pullman*

Facilities Services, Operations recommends that WSU Pullman departments report worn stair treads, broken floor tiles, or broken handrails through the myFacilities website (see *BPPM 80.45*). The myFacilities website is located at:

[myfacilities.wsu.edu](http://myfacilities.wsu.edu)

WSU Pullman departments unable to access or utilize the myFacilities website may report worn stair treads, broken floor tiles, or broken handrails to Facilities Services, Operations; telephone 509-335-9000.

##### *Non-Pullman Units*

Non-Pullman units are to contact the campus facilities services, operations office (see *BPPM 80.45*) to report worn stair treads, broken floor tiles, or broken handrails.

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### Ladders

Use a step ladder, not a chair or table, when reaching for something on a high shelf.

Prior to use, make sure that the ladder is in good condition.

Make sure the ladder is tall enough. Do not use the top two steps on ladders over 5 feet high.

### Opening Letters and Packages

Use regular letter openers or retractable blade box cutters *instead* of knives, exacto knives, razor blades, or scissors.

Retract the blade when not in use.

## FIRE SAFETY

Keep fire doors closed in order to contain smoke and gases in the event of fire. Make sure that fire doors with automatic closing devices close *completely*. See also *SPPM* 8.23.

### Fire Evacuation Plans

See also *SPPM* 8.23. See *SPPM* 8.27 for evacuation of disabled persons.

Know the unit's fire survival plan. The fire survival plan, including evacuation routes, is posted on the unit's safety bulletin board.

Practice the prescribed evacuation routes during regular fire drills.

### Fire Extinguishers

See also *SPPM* 8.22.

Know locations of nearby fire extinguishers.

Know the proper uses of each class of fire extinguisher.

### Reporting Inoperable Fire Extinguishers

Periodically check the gauge to ensure that the extinguisher is operational.

Report discharged or otherwise inoperable fire extinguishers to the campus facilities services, operations office.

### *WSU Pullman*

Facilities Services, Operations recommends that WSU Pullman departments report discharged or otherwise inoperable fire extinguishers through the myFacilities website (see *BPPM* 80.45). The myFacilities website is located at:

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### *WSU Pullman (cont.)*

WSU Pullman departments unable to access or utilize the myFacilities website may report discharged or otherwise inoperable fire extinguishers to Facilities Services, Operations; telephone 509-335-9000.

### *Non-Pullman Units*

Non-Pullman units are to contact the campus facilities services, operations office (see *BPPM* 80.45) to report discharged or otherwise inoperable fire extinguishers.

## FIRST AID KITS

See *SPPM* 2.42.

Know the locations of the unit's first aid kits.

Know who in the unit has been trained in first aid. Employees with first aid training are listed on the unit's first aid kits.

Restock the unit's first aid kits as necessary.

## OFFICE EQUIPMENT

### **Typewriters and Printers**

Keep long hair and loose clothing away from moving parts.

Turn off the power or unplug the electrical connection when changing an element, ribbon, or cartridge.

### **Filing Cabinets**

To improve the stability of a filing cabinet, place heavier materials in the lower drawers.

Open only one drawer at a time to avoid destabilizing the cabinet.

Use the handles, not the drawer, when opening file drawers.

Keep drawers shut to eliminate tripping hazards.

Do not place loose items on top of filing cabinets.

### **Paper Cutters**

Keep the blade down when not using the paper cutter.

Do not use a cutter unless a finger guard is firmly attached.

### **Fans**

Do not place fans in aisles and doorways.

Do not remove protective guards from fans.

Ensure that fan guards have openings no larger than one-half inch.

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### **ELECTRICAL SAFETY**

See also *SPPM 2.72*.

#### **Extension Cords**

Extension cords must have three wires, three prongs and at least 16 gauge wire.

Do not exceed the rated capacity for the extension cord.

Replace worn or frayed cords.

Prevent tripping hazards by keeping electrical cords out of aisles and doorways.

#### **Electrical Outlet or Switch Covers**

Report broken or missing outlet or switch covers to the campus facilities services, operations office.

#### **WSU Pullman**

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#### **Non-Pullman Units**

Non-Pullman units are to contact the campus facilities services, operations office (see *BPPM 80.45*) to report broken or missing outlet or switch covers.

#### **Additional Outlets**

When additional electrical outlets are required, departmental personnel should request that Facilities Services, Operations review electrical wiring in the office area.

If a multiple outlet strip can be safely used without overloading circuits, obtain a multiple outlet strip meeting the following specifications:

- Minimum of 16 gauge wire
- Groundwire with an extra prong on the plug (3 wires, 3 prongs)
- Breaker protected

Do not use electrical adapter cubes.

## **Safety Precautions for Office Workers**

### **PORTABLE HEATERS**

Facilities Services, Operations and the WSU Fire Marshal discourage the use of portable space heaters in University interior spaces. When a space heater is necessary, the department is to obtain a type of space heater approved by the WSU Fire Marshal. Refer to *SPPM* 8.50.