

**CITY OF SACRAMENTO REGULATORY COMPLIANCE PROGRAM**

**TOPIC: OFFICE SAFETY PROGRAM**

**EFFECTIVE DATE: 05/20/10**

**SUPERSEDES: N/A**

**SECTION: RCP #12**

**PURPOSE**

To ensure compliance with the California Code of Regulations, (CCR) Title 8, Section 1509, this regulatory compliance program provides guidance to office managers and staff on the elements of safe office work and applies to all City of Sacramento employees who work in an office environment. An office, like any other work environment, presents potential health and safety hazards. However, most of these hazards may be minimized or eliminated by designing jobs and workplaces properly, and by taking into account differences among tasks and individuals.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

**I. Managers/Supervisors**

Managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring office equipment is in safe working condition, providing adequate storage for office supplies and for training employees. In accordance with API #39 (Injury and Illness Prevention Plan), they are also responsible for conducting and documenting regular worksite inspections (Attachment A), training employees and following up on safety concerns.

**2. Office Staff**

Office staff is responsible for maintaining a neat and sanitary office environment and to report all safety issues immediately to his or her supervisor. Office staff is not responsible for repairing office equipment or systems. Office Staff are expected to participate in safety training and drills.

**PROCEDURES**

**I. General Electrical Safety**

- a. Electrical cords should be examined on a routine basis for frayed and exposed wiring. Particular attention should be paid to connections behind furniture since filing cabinets and bookcases may be pushed tightly against outlets, severely bending the cord at the plug. Electrical appliances must be approved and used in accordance with Underwriters Laboratory (UL) or other recognized national testing authority requirements.

Extension Cords

1. May only be used temporarily and in situations where fixed wiring is not feasible;
2. Must not be kept in good repair, free from defects in their insulation and not kinked, knotted, abraded or cut;
3. Extension cords must be placed so they do not present a tripping or slipping hazard;

4. Must not be placed through doorways having doors that can be closed, thereby damaging the cord; and
5. All extension cords must be of the grounded type (three prong).

## **2. Housekeeping**

- a. Good housekeeping is an essential element of accident prevention in offices. Poor housekeeping may lead to fires, injuries to personnel, or unhealthy working conditions. Falls and mishaps caused by dropping heavy cartons or other office equipment and supplies may also be a source of serious injuries to personnel;
- b. Passageways and aisles in offices should be clearly defined and kept free and clear of obstructions. Proper layout, spacing, and arrangement of equipment and furniture are essential;
- c. Chairs, filing cabinets, bookcases and desks must be replaced or repaired if they become damaged. Filing cabinet and desk drawers should always be kept closed when not in use. Heavy files should be placed in the bottom file drawers;
- d. Materials stored within supply rooms and cabinets must be neatly stacked and readily reached by adequate aisles. Care should be taken to stack materials, so they will not topple over. Under no circumstances may materials be stacked within 18 inches of fire sprinkler heads. Materials must not be stored so that they project into aisles or passageways in a manner that could cause persons to trip or hinder emergency evacuation;
- e. Electrical panels must not be blocked. They must have at least 18 inches of clearance on both sides and 36 inches in front of panel.

## **3. Ergonomics**

- a. Complaints concerning musculoskeletal problems are frequently heard from computer operators. For more information on ergonomics, refer to Regulatory Compliance Program No. 2 (Ergonomic Program). The most common complaints are related to the neck, shoulders, and back. Other concerns are the arms and hands and occasionally the legs. Common factors which have been identified and associated with increased risk of musculoskeletal problems include:
  1. Design of workstation;
  2. Nature of the task;
  3. Repetitiveness of the job;
  4. Degree of postural constraint;
  5. Work pace;
  6. Work/Rest schedules; and
  7. Personal attributes of individual workers.

- b. The key to comfort is maintaining the body in a relaxed, natural position. The ideal work position is to have the arms hanging relaxed from the shoulders. If a keyboard is used, arms should be bent at right angles at the elbow, with the hands held in a straight line with forearms and elbows close to the body. The head should be in line with the body and slightly forward.
- c. **Chairs**  
The chair is usually the most important piece of furniture that affects user comfort in the office. An ergonomically sound chair includes five means of adjustment - seat pan tilt, backrest angle, seat pan depth, seat height, and backrest height. Operators can then vary the chair adjustments according to the task and comfort. Chairs should have five wheels, and be adjusted for comfort so the back is supported and that the seat pan is at a height where the thighs are horizontal and feet are flat on the floor.
- d. **Working Height**  
The work surface height should fit the task and allow work to be performed with arms low and close to the body in relation to the task. Sit/Stand work stations allow for maximum flexibility for work stations with multiple users.
- e. **Work/Rest Schedules**  
Stress and fatigue may be minimized by designing work flow so that tasks requiring concentrated work at the terminal are alternated with non-computer based tasks throughout the workday. Also, short breaks (i.e. three to five minutes) should be taken at least once each hour when involved in continuous work at the computer.
- f. **Other Solutions**  
Additional measures that will aid in reducing discomfort while working with computers include:
  - a. Changing position, stand up or stretch whenever you start to feel tired;
  - b. Using a soft touch on the keyboard and keep your shoulders, hands, and fingers relaxed;
  - c. Using a document holder, positioned at about the same height and distance as the display screen;
  - d. Resting your eyes by occasionally looking off into the distance, blinking or closing them.
- g. **Office Lighting**  
Different tasks require different levels of lighting. For example, areas in which intricate work is performed require greater illumination than warehouses. Lighting needs vary from time to time and person to person as well. One approach is to use adjustable task lighting that can provide needed illumination without increasing general lighting.

#### **4. Waste Disposal**

- a. Whenever feasible, cardboard, paper, plastic, and metals should be recycled. Office personnel should carefully handle and properly dispose of hazardous trash, such as broken glass. A waste receptacle containing broken glass or other hazardous materials should be labeled to warn maintenance personnel of the potential hazard. Whenever possible, put broken glass in a hard-walled container and sealed with packing tape. Alkaline batteries, rechargeable batteries, and fluorescent light tubes must be disposed of properly as universal waste. For more information on proper disposal, including needle (sharps) disposal, contact the Environmental Health and Safety Office at 808-5278. The Sustainable Operations for City Departments Policy (API #57) for more information on recycling.

#### **5. Hazard Communication**

- a. Each office employee must be made aware of all hazardous materials (e.g. chemicals) that they may contact in his or her work area. For more information, refer to Regulatory Compliance Program No. 3 (Hazard Communication Program).

#### **6. Emergency Action Plans**

- a. Emergency Action Plans are developed to control unplanned events and minimize the effects. Through careful pre-planning, establishment of Emergency Action Teams, training and drills, employees and visitors can be safeguarded and the potential for damage to City assets is minimized.
- b. Emergency Action Plans typically include:
  - 1. Exits routes, meeting areas and employee accounting systems;
  - 2. Emergency evacuation triggers, incident command and notification of emergency services; and
  - 3. Bomb threats and facility security.
- c. Emergency Action Team Members (e.g. supervisors, receptionists, and key assigned members) must be trained annually. All facilities must have annual drills to assess the effectiveness of the Emergency Action Plan. All employees are expected to participate in the drills.

#### **7. Fire Extinguishers**

- a. Staff must be informed regarding the locations and classifications of portable fire extinguishers. Only staff trained at the City in the proper use of fire extinguishers should attempt to use one. If you use a fire extinguisher for any reason, it must be reported to Facilities Management, so it can be replaced with a charged extinguisher. It is also recommended that staff notify the Fire Department after using a fire extinguisher to put out a fire of any size, so fire personnel can inspect the facility and make sure the fire is completely extinguished. See Regulatory Compliance Program No. 4 (Fire Prevention Program) for more information.

## 8. Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls

- a. Slips, trips, and falls are a leading cause of injuries in any workplace and these types of injuries are easily prevented. Simple steps, like good housekeeping and being aware of your surroundings, can help reduce the chances of staff becoming injured by a slip, trip, or fall. Spills should be cleaned up immediately. Handrails should also be used consistently on stairs.

## 9. Safe Office Attire

- a. Wear loose, comfortable clothing that best fits the job task and working environment unless doing so would increase the potential for injury (e.g. neckties, long hair, or loose sleeves around rotating parts). Whenever possible, avoid open-toed shoes and sandals. This type of footwear is not allowed where material handling is conducted. Wear comfortable footwear with a good sole to reduce leg and back strain, and to help prevent slips and falls.

## 10. Back Injury Prevention

- a. Most back injuries are cumulative in nature. They may be caused by a prior injury flaring up, continued use of a heavy tool in the same position, or if a great deal of time is spent in the same position. Remember that most back injuries can be attributed to poor posture, poor body mechanics, poor work habits, stressful living, loss of flexibility, and/or poor conditioning. Most back injuries are avoidable if employees make the correct lifting choices. By focusing on strength, flexibility, and overall quality of life, staff can eliminate or minimize back injuries. Employees are encouraged to exercise, eat right and stretch as often as possible to help prevent injuries, and to minimize recovery time due to injuries.

## 11. Electronic Office Equipment Hazards

### a. Unsafe/Non-Approved Equipment

All poorly maintained or unsafe, poor quality, non-rated (i.e. UL listed) coffee makers, radios, lamps, etc. may not be used in City facilities. Such appliances can develop electrical shorts and create a fire and/or shock hazards. Equipment and cords should be inspected regularly and only a qualified individual should make repairs. Some facilities, such as City Hall, have banned personal coffee makers, toaster ovens, and space heaters completely, so be aware of what is prohibited at your facility;

### b. Live Parts Unguarded

Wall receptacles should be designed and installed so that no current-carrying parts will be exposed. All receptacle cover plates should be kept tight to eliminate the possibility of shock. All broken or cracked cover plates, as well as any unsafe electrical conditions, should be reported to Facilities Management immediately;

### c. Working on "Live Equipment"

Disconnect electrical equipment before cleaning, adjusting, or applying flammable solutions. If a guard is removed to clean or repair parts, replace it before testing the equipment and returning the equipment to service. Only trained personnel should attempt to repair any equipment;

d. **Electrical Panel Doors**

If an electrical malfunction should occur, the panel door, and anything else in front of the door will become very hot. Electrical panel doors should always be kept closed, to prevent “electrical flashover” in the event of an electrical malfunction and nothing can be stored within 36" of the panels. All breakers within the panels should be clearly labeled too;

e. **Office Equipment**

It is important that all staff understand how to properly operate electronic office equipment. Reading and following the instructions is essential, but so is communicating restrictions. All staff must understand the appropriate response when a piece of equipment malfunctions. For instance, when paper jams in a photocopier, reaching into a copier can result in burns or even electrocution.

Only trained staff should attempt to unjam the equipment. Certain materials, such as plastic transparency sheets, should not be used in some copiers. At the end of the day, be sure to power down all electrical equipment.

The names/phone numbers of repair or service providers should be posted prominently near the copier, fax or other equipment. When in doubt, contact the vendor or repair professional for assistance.

## Office Safety Inspection Checklist (Attachment A)

This checklist is intended as a guide to assist employees in conducting periodic safety and health inspections of their work areas. It includes questions relating to general office safety, fire prevention, and electrical safety. Questions which receive a "NO" answer require corrective action. If you have questions or need assistance with resolving any problems, please contact the EH&S Office at 808-5278.

Inspector Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Inspection Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Work Environment**

Yes No N/A

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Are all work areas clean, sanitary, and orderly?

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Is there adequate lighting?

**Walking / Working Surfaces**

Yes No N/A

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Are aisles and passages free of stored material that may present trip hazards?

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Are tile floors in places like kitchens and bathrooms free of water and slippery substances?

☐ ☐ ☐

Are carpet and throw rugs free of tears or trip hazards?

☐ ☐ ☐

Are hand rails provided on all fixed stairways?

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Are treads provided with anti-slip surfaces?

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Are stepladders or stools provided for reaching overhead storage areas and are materials stored safely?

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Are file drawers kept closed when not in use?

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Is furniture free of any unsafe defects?

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Are heating and air conditioning vents clear of obstructions?

**Emergency Information (Postings)**

Yes No N/A

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Are employees trained on emergency procedures?

☐ ☐ ☐

Are fire evacuation procedures/diagrams posted?

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Are the Cal-OSHA poster and other required posters displayed conspicuously?

☐ ☐ ☐

Is a copy of the facility emergency action plan available on site?

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Are safety hazard warning signs/caution signs provided to warn employees of pertinent hazards?

**Fire Prevention**

Yes No N/A

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Are portable fire extinguishers distributed properly (less than 75 feet travel distance for combustibles and 50 feet for flammables)?

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Are employees trained on the use of portable fire extinguishers?

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Are portable fire extinguishers visually inspected monthly and serviced annually?

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Are areas around portable fire extinguishers free of obstructions and properly labeled?

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Is heat-producing equipment used in a well-ventilated area?

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Are fire alarm pull stations clearly marked and unobstructed?

☐ ☐ ☐

Are proper clearances maintained below sprinkler heads (i.e. 18" clear)?

**Emergency Exits**

Yes	No	N/A	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Are doors, passageways or stairways that are neither exits nor access to exits and which could be mistaken for exits, appropriately marked "NOT AN EXIT," "TO BASEMENT," "STOREROOM," etc.?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Are a sufficient number of exits provided?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Are exits kept free of obstructions or locking devices which could impede immediate escape?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Are exits properly marked and illuminated?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Are the directions to exits, when not immediately apparent, marked with visible signs?

**Electrical Systems**

Yes	No	N/A	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Are all cord and cable connections intact and secure?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Are electrical outlets free of overloads?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Is fixed wiring used instead of flexible/extension cords?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Is the area around electrical panels and breakers free of obstructions?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Are high-voltage electrical service rooms kept locked?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Are electrical cords routed such that they are free of sharp objects, clearly visible, in good condition and grounded?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Are electrical appliances approved (Underwriters Laboratory, Inc. (UL), etc.)?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Are space heaters located away from combustibles and properly ventilated?

**Material Storage**

Yes	No	N/A	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Are storage racks and shelves capable of supporting the intended load and materials stored safely?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Are storage racks secured from falling?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Are office equipment stored in a stable manner, not capable of falling?

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