OFFICE SAFETY

Leader's Guide, Fact Sheet & Quiz

This easy-to-use Leader's Guide is provided to assist in conducting a successful presentation.

PREPARING FOR THE MEETING

Here are a few suggestions for using this program:

a) Review the contents of the Fact Sheet that immediately follows this page to familiarize yourself with the program topic and the training points discussed in the program. The Fact Sheet also includes a list of Program Objectives that details the information that participants should learn from watching the program.

b) If required by your organization, make an attendance record to be signed by each participant to document the training to be conducted.

c) Prepare the area and equipment to be used for the training. Make sure the watching environment is comfortable and free from outside distractions. Also, ensure that participants can see and hear the TV screen or computer monitor without obstructions.

d) Make copies of the Review Quiz included at the end of this Leader's Guide to be completed by participants at the conclusion of the presentation. Be aware that the page containing the answers to the quiz comes _before_ the quiz itself, which is on the final page.

CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION

a) Begin the meeting by welcoming the participants. Introduce yourself and give each person an opportunity to become acquainted if there are new people joining the training session.

b) Introduce the program by its title and explain to participants what they are expected to learn as stated in the Program Objectives of the Fact Sheet.

c) Play the program without interruption. Upon completion, lead discussions about your organization's specific policies regarding the subject matter. Make sure to note any unique hazards associated with the program's topic that participants may encounter while performing their job duties at your facility.

d) Hand out copies of the review quiz to all of the participants and make sure each one completes it before concluding the training session.

LENGTH: 19 MINUTES   **PRODUCTION YEAR: 2021**

PROGRAM SYNOPSIS:
Millions of employees seek medical treatment every year for injuries that happen on the job. Most people think that they occur in manufacturing facilities or on construction sites. But a surprising number of workplace injuries take place in offices like the one you work in. Taking inventory or storing supplies on a shelf, using a shredder, carrying a box of paper to the copier, or even just sitting at your desk: they are all common office activities, and they are all ways you could get hurt. This program helps to avoid office related injuries by understanding the potential hazards that can exist in an office and taking positive steps to reduce or eliminate them.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:
After watching the program, the participant should:
• Know how to avoid falls;
• Be aware of and avoid the misuse of office equipment;
• Know how to setup the workstation ergonomically;
• Understand how to prevent eyestrain;
• Be able to work safely with electrically powered office equipment;
• Know how to safely handle common office supplies;
• Know how to prevent an office fire and what to do when one occurs.

PROGRAM OUTLINE:

INTRODUCTION
•   Millions of employees seek medical treatment every year for injuries that happen on the job. Most people think that they occur in manufacturing facilities or on construction sites. But a surprising number of workplace injuries take place in offices like the one you work in. And if you don't stop and think about the hazards that can exist in your office, it could be you that's on the way to the hospital one day.
•   Taking inventory or storing supplies on a shelf, using a shredder, carrying a box of paper to the copier, or even just sitting at your desk: they are all common office activities, and they are all ways you could get hurt.
•   But you can avoid these and other office related injuries by understanding the potential hazards that can exist in an office and take positive steps to reduce or eliminate them.

AVOIDING FALLS
•   Believe it or not, when you work in an office, you are at least twice as likely as a non-office worker to suffer a disabling injury due to a fall. But you can reduce that risk by adhering to a few commonsense safety principles as you go about your day.
•   First, remember to walk, don't run. You don't need to go any faster and a walking pace is safest, even in an emergency. An equally important rule is look where you're going. Using your eyes for something else as you're walking, like reading a report or looking at your cell phone, can result in a jarring experience.
•   What should you be looking out for? Tripping hazards that you're likely to stumble over in today's office environments include desk and filing cabinet drawers that have been left open, office supplies stacked in hallways, or other floor clutter, computer cables, power cords, and telephone wires that snake across the floor and torn carpet or loose flooring.
•   You can encounter serious slipping hazards whenever rainwater or other liquids get onto smooth or polished floors, such as in foyers and entryways. It's a hazard that's easy to miss. You need to be especially careful during wet or snowy weather. Be sure to wipe your feet when you come in from outside. Look for beverages or other spills in the break room too. If you spill something yourself, clean it up.
•   No matter how alert you are, you won't be able to see any hazards if there's not enough light. So make a note of burnt out bulbs and malfunctioning light fixtures. Replace or report them. And talk to your supervisor about areas that are always too dark. More light in the right places will make everyone in the office safer.

PUTTING YOURSELF AT RISK

• While some office accidents happen to us, others happen because we put ourselves at risk. Even doing something as simple as sitting in a chair can get us in trouble, because sometimes we use chairs and other office furniture in ways they weren't designed for.

• One very risky form of chair abuse is tilting backward with your feet up on a desk so you can work more comfortably. But there's nothing comfortable about falling over backwards, so keep all of your chair's legs on the floor at all times.

• Standing on a chair to reach something is another dangerous move. It may seem like a time saver, but it's really just a quick way of getting to the ground and getting hurt. Use a foot stool or ladder instead. They're designed to do the job safely.

• Even when they are used in the right way, office chairs eventually wear out. To make sure yours doesn't let you down, inspected for loose or damaged parts or cracked welds. If you find a problem, tag the chair broken and remove it from service.

• Misusing things like staplers and paper cutters is another good way to get hurt. Pounding on a stapler to try and force it to fasten more sheets of paper than it was designed to handle is a bad idea, unless you actually want to damage the nerves in the palm of your hand.

• It doesn't pay to overload paper cutters either. Trying to power the blade through too much paper will do a lousy cutting job and could injure you in the process. Take some of the paper out and make several smaller cuts instead and watch out for that blade. It'll cut your fingers and hands just as easily as it cuts paper, so keep them out of the way.

• Speaking of sharp objects, scissors, push pins and utility knives can easily hide in clutter on your desktop or worktable. And you don't want to find out the hard way that they are in there, so store sharp tools and materials in their own special drawers or containers, separate from other supplies.

• We don't usually think of paper as being hazardous, but as sharp edges can and will cut you. You can prevent this painful experience by using finger guards. You can even get sliced by the flap of an envelope, so moisten them with a sponge instead of licking them. It's safer and more sanitary too.

SETTING UP YOUR WORKSTATION

• Shoes that don't fit not only feel uncomfortable, over time they can actually injure your feet. The same principle applies to your workstation. If it doesn't fit you, it can lead to problems with your neck, back, hands, wrists, even your eyes.

• The study of preventing these types of problems is called ergonomics. When you set up your desk, chair and computer using ergonomic principles, you can work in a posture that relieves physical stresses instead of making them worse.

• The first step is to adjust your chair's height. Position it so when your forearms are flat on your work surface, they form an angle between 90 and 120 degrees with your upper arms. Next, you need to focus on your lower body. The better support your chair gives to your hips, thighs, and lower back, the less strain you'll feel and the less chance of being injured.

• Your thigh should be roughly parallel to the floor and your knees about the same height as your hips, with your feet placed slightly forward. Your back should be snug against the back of the chair. Your feet need good support too. They should be resting flat on the floor. If they're dangling, that will stretch your back, so you'll need to use a footrest to provide some support.

• Lastly, adjust your computer keyboard so you can keep your wrists flat as you use it. This "flat wrists" position helps to prevent carpal tunnel syndrome, which can be extremely painful. If the keyboard itself won't adjust, you can put a wrist pad or even a rolled-up towel in front of it to get the same result. You might also need to raise your seat height a little.

PREVENTING EYESTRAIN

• Computers make much of our work easier. Yet when we use them, it often feels like our eyes end up working harder than ever. Doctors have given this problem a name: computer vision syndrome. Symptoms include dry, irritated eyes, blurred vision and headaches, as well as neck and shoulder pain.

• When we stare at a computer screen, we blink at only about half the normal rate, and blinking helps to keep our eyes moist, so it's no wonder our eyes get scratchy. It helps to make a habit of consciously blinking more often when you do computer work and use lubricating eye drops or artificial tears if you really get dry.

• Another way to take the strain off your eyes as well as the muscles in your neck and shoulders, is to position your computer's monitor correctly. The screen should be 16 to 27 inches away from you, with a top at or just below your eye level.

• And when was the last time you cleaned your computer screen? You're just asking for eyestrain if you let your monitor get dirty. The screen's electrical charge attracts dust, so unless you clean your screen regularly, the images will get harder and harder for you to see. Before cleaning, power down your monitor, then use disposable wipes that are made specifically for cleaning monitor screens. Rub the wipe across the screen gradually in small circles. Avoid putting direct pressure on the screen surface. If you do this on a regular basis, your eyes will really appreciate it.

• Lastly, give your eyes a rest now and then. Take occasional breaks to focus on something at least 20 feet away, or simply switch to a different task for a while, like filing.

USING POWERED EQUIPMENT

• Electrically powered equipment is so commonplace in our offices that it's easy to forget that it can be dangerous. Printers, fax machines, paper shredders, calculators, copiers: we couldn't get through a work day without their help, but their motors drive moving parts like rollers, belts, gears and blades that can pinch, crush or cut your fingers if you let them. So keep clear of the working parts of any power equipment.

• Don't remove protective guards or open any access panels when the machine is running. Loose clothing, hair or jewelry can sometimes get caught in the works if you do.

• Copiers can pose a threat to your eyes as well. The lamps in many copiers are bright enough to do real damage, so always keep the document covered down when the machine is operating. If you can't close the cover completely, make sure you look away from the light and close your eyes.

• Copiers and printers both use toner or powdered ink, which can irritate your skin and your eyes. While these materials now come in cartridges, it's still a good idea to handle them carefully. If any powder does manage to spill or leak out, clean it up right away. Then wash your hands and face thoroughly.

• The electricity that powers office equipment can also be dangerous. A frayed or cracked cord can give you a severe shock, even start a fire. Make a habit of checking the cords on the equipment you use. If you discover any problems, don't plug them in. Take the equipment out of service and call for repairs.

• Power strips and multi plugs make it easy to connect many pieces of equipment to a single outlet, but that's asking for big trouble. Overloading an outlet can draw enough excess power to overheat the wires inside the walls, and that can cause a fire.

• To avoid overloading, use an extension cord to plug some of the equipment into a different outlet, but keep the cord out of the way, or tape it down to prevent people from tripping over it. And remember, an extension cord is never a permanent solution if there aren't enough receptacles, talk to your supervisor about having more installed or consider moving some of the equipment to another area.

HANDLING OFFICE SUPPLIES

• Picking up and moving supplies, stacking materials on shelves and filing: everybody who works in an office does these things at least once in a while, many of us throughout the day. But lifting things the wrong way can hurt your back. Storing them can be tricky as well, and even filing has its pitfalls. Let's look at how to do these things safely.

• Step one in safe lifting is always think before you lift. Do you really want to lift and carry that box by yourself? If you have doubts, ask a coworker for an assist, or use a hand truck or dolly.

• When you are making a lift on your own, remember to get close to the object. Bend at the knees. Keep your back straight. And lift with your legs. When it's time to put the object down, keep your back straight, bend at the knees and lower it using your legs.

• You might not think so, but sometimes storing office materials can be hazardous as well. Putting too much weight near the top of a bookcase or set of shelves will make it top heavy, which could result in it falling over. Overloading shelves could result in them collapsing. In either case, you or a coworker could be seriously injured. You could avoid this by loading bottom shelves first, then working your way up. Don't overload any shelf and never put heavy items on upper shelves.

- You should use caution when filing too. A filing cabinet's sliding drawer shifts large amounts of weight back and forth. This makes the cabinet very sensitive to the way you load and use it. Just like with bookcases, putting too much weight in the upper drawers will make it dangerously top heavy and easily tipped over.
- Opening two or more the drawers in a filing cabinet at once can also make it tip forward. To avoid this, load filing cabinets from the bottom up as well and never open more than one drawer at a time. And don't forget to close drawers when you're done with them. People can get hurt running into drawers that are left open.

FIRE SAFETY IN THE OFFICE
- Today's office is loaded with flammable materials like paper, plastic and furniture. Even carpeting can burn. And with nearly 100,000 fires occurring in commercial buildings every year, fire safety is a crucial part of staying safe in the office. Here the watchwords are prevention and preparation.
- Fire prevention should go on all the time. You can do your part by watching out for unsafe conditions. Don't let paper or discarded packaging accumulate near electrical connections and take care when using flammable liquids and aerosols such as keyboard and screen cleaners. Make sure to put them away when you're finished too. Fires can't start if you keep flammable materials away from sparks or flame.
- If you are a smoker, you can help to prevent fires by smoking only in designated areas. Dispose of butts and used matches properly so they can't ignite anything.
- In spite of our best efforts, fires do happen. That's why your company has prepared a detailed action plan that's designed to deal with these types of emergencies. This plan is available to all employees, and you should familiarize yourself with it, so you know ahead of time what to do if the worst occurs.
- Identify at least two evacuation routes from your work areas. That way you'll have an alternate if your primary route is blocked. You'll find these routes marked on the emergency exit diagrams that are posted throughout your facility.
- If you discover a fire, pull the fire alarm immediately. Don't try to extinguish it unless you have been trained and authorized to do so and you have the proper type of extinguisher.
- When you hear a fire alarm, quickly proceed to an exit and leave the area. You can set a good example for your coworkers by remaining calm walk. Do not run. Never use an elevator during a fire. They can shut down during an emergency. The fire stairs are the only safe way out.
- Once you're outside the building, report to your designated gathering point and let your fire warden know that you're safe. This will help them determine if there was anyone still in the building who may need assistance.

CONCLUSION
- As we've seen, offices can be more hazardous places than you think, but you can work safely if you pay attention to potential hazards and take steps to avoid them. Let's review.
- Use office furniture, equipment and materials the way they were designed to be used. Set up your workstation to minimize the physical stress on your body.
- Reduce the potential for eyestrain by keeping your computer monitor clean and resting your eyes regularly.
- To avoid falls, pay attention to where you're going and lookout for common slipping and tripping hazards.
- Remember, powered equipment can hurt you and use it with caution.
- Know how to lift safely and avoid overloading shelves and filing cabinets.
- Do your part to prevent fires and be prepared if one does occur.
- Once you've identified the hazards and determined how to avoid them, you can get even more done in your office and do it all safely.

ANSWERS TO THE REVIEW QUIZ

1. a

2. b

3. b

4. a

5. a

6. a

7. a

8. a

9. b

10. a

OFFICE SAFETY
REVIEW QUIZ

The following questions are provided to determine how well you understand the information presented in this program.

Name_____**Date**_____

1. When you work in an office you're at least twice as likely as a non-office worker to suffer a disabling injury due to a fall.

a. True
b. False

2. In today's fast-paced office it's beneficial to run from place to place so you can get things done more quickly.

a. True
b. False

3. You're unlikely to injure yourself when trying to force a stapler to fasten more sheets of paper than it was designed to handle.

a. True
b. False

4. You should inspect your office chair regularly for loose or damaged parts and cracked welds.

a. True
b. False

5. To help to prevent injury when you are typing, you should keep your wrists flat, not bent up or down.

a. True
b. False

6. Most people blink at about half their normal rate when they are looking at a computer monitor.

a. True
b. False

7. Overloading an electrical outlet can draw enough excess power to overheat the electric wires inside the walls, which can cause a fire.

a. True
b. False

8. When you are lifting something by yourself, remember to get close to the object, bend at the knees, keep your back straight, and lift with your legs.

a. True
b. False

9. You should place heavy items on the upper shelves of a bookcase.

a. True
b. False

10. The watchwords for fire safety at the office are "prevention" and "preparation".

a. True
b. False