

Home Office Safety Tips

Working from home may sound ideal – no journeys in gridlocked traffic, no dress code and all your home comforts. You may not want to think about life's dangers but things like fires can affect anyone at any time. Even if the likelihood of an emergency in your home office is small, it's important to plan for the worst and be prepared. The following checklist is designed to assess the overall safety of your alternate duty station.

Safety Guidelines for the Homework Space

The following are only recommendations, and do not encompass every situation. These guidelines are to assist you in a survey of the overall safety and adequacy of your alternate worksite:

1. Develop and practice a fire evacuation plan for use in the event of an emergency.
2. Check your smoke detectors regularly and replace batteries once a year.
3. Always have a working fire extinguisher conveniently located in your home, and check the charge regularly.
4. Computers are heavy. Always place them on sturdy, level, well maintained furniture.
5. Choose office chairs that provide good supporting backrests and allow adjustments to fit you comfortably.
6. Locate your computer to eliminate noticeable glare from windows and lighting. Place the computer monitor at a height which is comfortable and does not produce neck or back strain. Locate computer keyboards at heights that do not cause wrist strain or place the keyboard on an adjustable surface.
7. Install sufficient lighting in locations to reduce glare on the work surface.
8. Arrange file cabinets so that opened drawers do not block aisles.
9. Be sure to leave aisle space, where possible, to reduce tripping hazards.
10. Always make sure electrical equipment is connected to grounded outlets.
11. Avoid fire hazards by never overloading electrical circuits.
12. Inspect and repair carpeting with frayed edges or loose seams. Avoid using throw rugs that can cause tripping hazards in your workspace.
13. Locate computers, phones, and other electrical equipment in a manner that keeps power cords out of walkways.
14. Always power down computers after the workday is over and turn off all electrical equipment during thunderstorms.
15. Keep your work area clean and avoid clutter which can cause fire and tripping hazards.
16. Always use proper lifting techniques when moving or lifting heavy equipment and furniture.
17. Always report accidents and injuries immediately to your supervisor.

Think of a list of possible dangers in your own office and items that you would need should this become a reality. We've suggested the essentials.

- Smoke Alarms – You will already have these in your home but why not install another in your office due to the large amount of electricals? Remember to check the batteries regularly.
- Fire Extinguishers – Make sure you are confident with using one before you do so. Be aware that there are various types for different types of fire. Keep a cool head if a fire occurs and make sure you use the right type.
- Carbon Monoxide Detectors – You might put your headache down to your heavy workload but what if you're actually being poisoned? Installing a detector is easy and necessary safety solution.
- First Aid Kit – Even if you do not recognize an immediate risk, accidents can and do happen. An easy to access first aid kit means you can quickly fix up your injury and get back to work.
- Liquids and Electrical Equipment – Don't store any liquids next to anything electrical. The smallest spill could easily lead to a fire.
- Water – It sounds obvious but without a designated lunch break, you might forget to keep hydrated. Look after yourself by drinking regularly and give yourself time to eat. Just keep any drinks away from electronics.