

News & Notes

OFFICE VISION PROBLEMS

A few work area adjustments can help alleviate some potential office vision issues.

Correctly position monitors - Prevent Blindness America recommends workers place their computer monitors slightly below eye level and 20-26 inches from their eyes. Screens that can tilt or swivel are especially beneficial.

Minimize screen glare - The American Optometric Association points to screen glare as a major cause of eyestrain in the office. To minimize strain, avoid positioning monitors opposite open windows, or be sure to always close shades or blinds. A glare reduction filter also can be used.

Wear the right glasses - Workers should tell their eye doctor if they spend a large portion of the day working on the computer. The doctor can check the efficiency of vision at 20-30 inches – the typical distance a computer monitor should be placed. Glasses are available for computer use that allow the wearer to see the full monitor without having to excessively strain the neck.

Increase font size on computer - Small font sizes on the computer can strain both your vision and your neck, as workers tend to pull the head forward to view smaller print. A simple adjustment to the font size on the computer screen can eliminate the need for this. In many software programs, you can use the CTRL-scroll up or down or CTRL+ or CTRL- to increase or reduce the size of the page you are looking at.

Take a break - Giving your eyes a rest and allowing them to focus on things at varying distances can help reduce strain and fatigue. Employees should take a 10-minute break for every hour spent on the computer. These breaks can include working on tasks that require your eyes to focus on objects at a further range.



RIDDLE OF THE MONTH

Always coming but never been
Often talked about but never seen...
Daily searched but never clear
Still out there and coming near...
Though they expect it to appear
They will never find it here...
What am I?

Answer on page 2 Safety Bits & Pieces

Safety Matters



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Office Safety

According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) over 80,000 office and administrative workers suffer on-the-job injuries yearly. Many of these injuries could have been prevented had workers or supervisors recognized the risks and implemented simple workplace modifications to help mitigate them.

FALLS

Slips, trips and falls, the most common type of office injury, sideline over 25,000 workers according to BLS. Several hazards contribute to these injuries, although most can be significantly reduced, often by raising awareness among employees. Follow these four guidelines to reduce falls in the office.

1) Stay clutter-free - Boxes, files and various items piled in walkways can create a tripping hazard. Be certain that all materials are safely stored in their proper location to prevent buildup of clutter in walkways. Further, in addition to posing an electrical hazard, stretching cords across walkways or under rugs creates a tripping hazard, so ensure all cords are properly secured and covered.

2) Step on up - Standing on chairs – particularly rolling office chairs – is a significant fall hazard. Workers who need to reach something at an elevated height should use a stepladder. The Chicago-based American Ladder Institute cautions that stepladders must be fully opened and placed on level, firm ground. Workers should never climb higher than the step indicated as the highest safe standing level and should NEVER stand on the top step of any step ladder.

3) Maintain a clear line of vision - Workers can collide when making turns in the hallways and around blind corners or cubicle walls. The National Safety Council suggests installing convex mirrors at intersections to help reduce collisions. If workers can see who is coming around the corner, collisions are less likely to occur.

4) Get a grip - Carpeting and other skid-resistant surfaces can serve to reduce falls. Marble or tile can become very slippery, particularly when wet, according to the National Safety Council. Placing carpets down can be especially helpful at entrance ways, where workers are likely to be coming in with shoes wet from rain or snow.

STRUCK OR CAUGHT BY INCIDENTS

Another major type of injury in the office setting comes from workers being struck by or caught by an object. Incidents of this nature account for over 15,000 injuries each year according to BLS. Follow these helpful tips to reduce this hazard:

1) Shut the drawer - File cabinets with too many fully extended drawers could tip over if they are not secured, the council warns. Additionally, open drawers on desks and file cabinets pose a tripping hazard, so be sure to always completely close drawers when not in use.

2) Safe stacking - According to the Office of Compliance (OOC) which oversees the safety of U.S. congressional workers, proper storage of heavy items can help reduce the number of office injuries. Large stacks of materials and heavy equipment can cause major injuries if they are knocked over. OOC recommends storing heavy objects close to the floor, and warns that the load capacity of shelves or storage units should never be exceeded.

If the above guidelines are followed a large percentage of office accidents resulting in injury can be eliminated.

SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

Florescent lights in office buildings often are too bright for optimal vision. According to the American Optometric Association, light that is at about half-normal office levels is preferred. This can be achieved by removing some bulbs from overhead fixtures. If more light is needed for a particular task, consider individual task lamps rather than increasing overall lighting. Lightbulbs in task lamps should be fully recessed to avoid the creation of a bright spot in the worker's line of vision.

Safety Bits & Pieces

OFFICE FIRE SAFETY TIPS

Did you know there are almost 4000 office fires each year? Some routine inspections around the office can help reduce the likelihood of these incidents occurring.

Maintain cords in good repair - Damaged and ungrounded power cords pose a serious fire hazard and violate safety codes. Cords should be inspected regularly for wear and taken out of service if they are frayed or have exposed wire. Further, cords should never be used if the third prong has been damaged or removed. Make sure cords are not overloading outlets. The most common causes of fires started by extension cords are improper use and overloading. Extension cords should be approved by a certifying laboratory such as Underwriters Laboratories, and only used temporarily to connect one device at a time. If extension cords are going to be in use longer than 90 days then a permanent source of electricity should be installed.

Never block fire sprinklers - Furniture and tall stacks of materials can block the range of fire sprinklers, reducing their effectiveness in the event of an emergency. Objects should never be placed higher than 18 inches below sprinkler heads to allow a full range of coverage.

Do not block escape routes or prop open fire doors - Items never should be stored along an emergency exit route. These paths should remain free of clutter, debris and storage items/boxes. Fire doors should not be held open by unapproved means (such as with a garbage can or chair), as this creates a significant fire hazard.

RIDDLE OF THE MONTH ANSWER

Tomorrow

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE...



"Five minute energy drink...for those times when you want to race around the house for no reason whatsoever."



5 Office Ergonomics Tips to Avoid Fatigue

Did you know that your workstation can contribute to fatigue? Below are five tips that can help you create a more ergonomic workstation that supports your energy level throughout the day.

1. Keep moving: regularly vary your body positioning. Don't maintain the same posture or position for extended periods of time. Stand up, walk around, or do some light stretches for a few minutes every hour or so.

2. Maintain good head and neck posture. First, check the position of your monitor. Your computer monitor should be positioned directly in front of you, with the center of the screen at eye level. Whether you are sitting or standing when you are working in front of the monitor, your neck and shoulders should be in a relaxed and neutral position. If you use more than one monitor, be sure you can see them easily without having to turn your head.

3. Combat eye strain. Remember to rest your eyes. Be sure to blink regularly! Close your eyes periodically to help avoid eye strain. A popular tip is the 20-20-20 rule. It suggests that every 20 minutes, you take a 20-second break from looking at your monitor. During the break, look at something that's 20 feet away from you to vary your focus.

You might also want to consider changing your computer's settings. The color scheme you've selected may be pretty to look at, but it may not be doing your eyes any favors. If you don't have enough contrast, your eyes may be working harder than they need to. You might also consider reducing the brightness of your monitor.

4. Be aware of your overall posture. Don't slouch. If you're sitting, make sure your hips are positioned as far back as they can go in your chair. The back of your chair should support your upper and lower back, so sit in a position that lets the chair guide your posture. Your head, neck, and shoulders should be relaxed; your elbows should remain close to your body. Your forearms, wrists, and hands should be in a straight line and be approximately parallel to the floor.

5. Position your chair properly. When sitting while working, scoot in. Don't sit too far away from your keyboard and mouse. If you have to stretch your arms out to reach your mouse and keyboard, you'll tire more easily. Position your keyboard and mouse at a distance where you can keep your elbows bent in a neutral position. Also, adjust your chair for your height. Your feet should comfortably rest on the floor when you are sitting; your knees should be at or just below hip level. If your seating position is too low or too high, raise or lower the chair—or get a footrest.



QUOTATION OF THE MONTH

to be inspired is great,
to inspire is incredible

Click It or Ticket...

In 2016, more than 32 million people failed to buckle up while in their vehicles - that's nearly 10 percent of drivers and passengers. The enactment of seat belt laws decades ago has had a dramatic effect: From 2012 to 2016, seat belts saved nearly 67,000 lives nationally.

But there's still so much work to do. Tragically, if all passenger vehicle occupants 5 and older involved in fatal crashes had worn their seatbelts, an additional 2,456 lives could have been saved in 2016 alone.

From May 21 to June 3, Delaware law enforcement is joining the Delaware Office of Highway Safety (OHS) for the 2018 Click It or Ticket enforcement mobilization. We will be out in full force, cracking down on seat belt violations and issuing citations to anyone caught traveling without a buckled seat belt or transporting unrestrained children. OHS is working to spread the message that seat belts save lives.

With the Memorial Day holiday weekend marking the official start to summer, there will surely be thousands more families traveling the roads to their vacation destination. We have found this to be the most effective time to remind drivers why seat belt laws matter - they help save lives. Locally, 31 unbelted Delawareans died in motor vehicle crashes in 2017.

Nighttime also poses a particularly dangerous threat to vehicle occupants. More people are being killed in nighttime crashes than ever before, and we are going to be targeting nighttime seat belt violators as a result. Wearing your seat belt is required by law. Day and night, front seat and back. Click It or Ticket!