



POLICY & PROCEDURE

SECTION: HUMAN RESOURCES

NO: HR-HS-20

REFERENCE: Health and Safety

Date:
November 24, 2020

Next Review Date:
November 2022

TITLE: OFFICE SAFETY

1.0 POLICY

- 1.1 The purpose of this the policy is to protect and promote the health and safety of our employees by creating awareness of hazards and to reduce risk factors in the office environment.
- 1.2 Office hazards may be different from those in an industrial setting, but they are also capable of causing personal injury. Efforts to eliminate hazards from an office environment will ensure that everyone has a safe and healthy workplace.

2.0 PROCEDURES

2.1 Layout

An assessment of doorways, walkways, access to equipment, means of escape and storage must be undertaken when determining an office space and layout. Office layouts are to be reviewed by the Department Manager prior to installation and with consideration to health and safety. For new locations, significant moves or relocations, the layout will be approved by Senior Management. The layout will meet health and safety expectations by:

- (a) Ensuring clear access to emergency exits and passageways;
- (b) Ensuring furniture and equipment is positioned in such a way that they do not extend into walkways or doorways, or obstruct sight lines around corners or partitions;

- (c) Ensuring that workstations near windows will be placed so there is minimum glare; and
- (d) Ensuring there is enough space for equipment and storage.

2.2 Clothing and Footwear

- (a) Wear appropriate clothing that is safe for the work environment and allows the body free movement of hips and limbs.
- (b) Inappropriate clothing for the office includes tank tops, midriff tops, halter tops, shirts with potentially offensive words, terms, logos, pictures, cartoons, slogans or of a religious nature;
- (c) Ensure any loose clothing, ties, scarves, jewelry or long hair cannot become entangled or pulled into office equipment such as shredders or any equipment with rollers; and,
- (d) Footwear that is appropriate and safe for the work environment must be worn at all times, bare feet or sock feet is not allowed. All footwear heels must not exceed 5 cm in height and the heel must be a block-type heel of substantial width to ensure good support and stability, and an even distribution of weight. Footwear with open toes and sandals are allowed but must provide enough support around the heel and toe area for stability. All footwear and sandals must have at a minimum, a secure strap around the back of the heel/ankle. Open-toed footwear and sandals are not to be worn in areas where they would put employee safety at risk. All footwear must be in good condition. Flip flops, beach shoes, high heels and slip-on/slide-on open-heeled footwear are not considered appropriate footwear for offices and must not be worn at any time. An exception is made for Pool employees (lifeguards/swim instructors) at the Recreation Complex who may wear flip flops or beach shoes while working on the pool deck. Departments may implement additional requirements, in conjunction with the HR department, where deemed necessary.

2.3 Slips, Trips and Falls

Slips, trips and falls are the number one cause of all office injuries. By keeping aisles clear and being aware of the office environment and layout, injuries may be reduced or eliminated.

Prevention of slips, trips and falls can be achieved by:

- (a) Pay proper attention and use a handrail when going up or down stairs. Falls can occur when people are distracted by conversations or look back to address the person behind them;
- (b) Use only approved step stools and ladders, never stand on a chair;
- (c) Wipe up spills or pick up any other debris promptly that may cause a slip and fall;
- (d) Walk, don't run. Always look where you're going (not at your papers or electronic devices);

- (e) When walking in aisles or passageways, keep to the right;
- (f) Wear appropriate footwear as noted above in 2.2 (d) and in good condition;
- (g) Employees should not attempt to carry stacks of materials that could obstruct vision. If an elevator is available, it should be used instead of carrying stacks of material up and down flights of stairs;
- (h) When temporary extension cords crossing a floor are a necessity, they should be taped down or covered with a rubber cord cover;
- (i) Floor surfaces should have a slip-resistant finish. Slip-resistant floor wax can give polished floors a higher coefficient of friction;
- (j) Tripping hazards can be minimized by immediately replacing defective tiles and carpet or worn floor mats. Floor mats and runners in good condition offer slip-resistant protection for stairways or entrances;
- (k) Poor sitting habits can also lead to falls. Rolling in one's chair across the floor or leaning sideways in a chair to pick up objects from the floor can lead to a fall. Also, leaning far back in the chair with feet up on a desk or balancing a stationary chair on 2 legs can also result in falls;
- (l) Never leave a file cabinet drawer open, the lower drawers could become trip hazards; and,
- (m) If you are not able to immediately correct the hazard, report the deficiency to supervisory staff without delay.

2.4 Lighting

Office work is visually demanding and requires good lighting for maximum comfort and productivity. "Good" lighting means providing enough illumination so that people can see printed, handwritten or displayed documents clearly but are not blinded by excessively high light levels (a cause of glare).

- (a) Areas that are not adequately lit, or are too bright, can cause headaches, eye strain, blurred vision, dry irritable eyes and fatigue. Ensure that the working area is properly lit for the job and that window placement does not create glare; and,
- (b) Computers plays a large role in eye fatigue so regular breaks should be taken to allow the eyes to recover and return to normal state. Look away from the computer every few minutes and focus on distant objects. Remember to blink often.

2.5 Housekeeping

Housekeeping plays a large role in preventing injuries. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that their workstation, storage areas, passageways and aisles are not cluttered or obstructed.

- (a) Clear access shall be maintained for all electrical panels and disconnects;

- (b) Clear access shall be maintained for exit doors and exit corridors;
- (c) Aisle ways and walkways shall be kept free of obstructions and hazards to the extent that is practical;
- (d) Individual workstations shall be kept free and clear of obstructions, debris and trip hazards that may endanger workers; and,
- (e) Loose objects and broken glass should be removed when first noticed. Broken glass should be immediately vacuumed or swept up and the fine pieces should be picked up with a damp cloth.

2.6 Furniture and File Cabinets

- (a) Furniture should be considered when determining the office layout to ensure adequate access around furniture and to exit doors. Furniture should be maintained in good condition to avoid sharp edges, points or burrs. Deficiencies should be reported immediately to supervisory staff;
- (b) Chairs should be placed squarely on the floor and all 5 casters should be secured. All parts of the chair should be sturdy and in good condition and should not present a hazard to the user. Chairs with 4 casters must not be used and removed immediately; and,
- (c) Filing cabinet drawers should be opened and closed slowly and carefully. Filing cabinets should not be overloaded and the weight should be evenly distributed to avoid tipping. Only one drawer should be opened at a time and should never be left open. Do not open a drawer with someone underneath it. Always open and close drawers using the handles, not with your feet.

2.7 Material Handling

Employees shall refer to City of Dryden Material Handling Policy & Procedures (HR-HS-27) for full recommendations.

It is important that all employees practice safe lifting techniques as follows:

- (a) Plan the lift and ensure the route of travel is clear of obstruction;
- (b) Stand with feet apart, alongside the object to be lifted;
- (c) Use the "sit-down" position, maintaining the natural arch of the spine;
- (d) Tuck the chin;
- (e) Get a good grip of the object;
- (f) Lift the object by standing up in an upward motion, do not lift with the arms or back;
- (g) Keep the object as close to the body as possible; and,
- (h) Centre the weight over the feet and avoid twisting.

2.7.1 It is recommended that no one should lift any objects exceeding 50 pounds in weight. Should a situation require lifting in excess of 50 pounds, use the following procedure:

This policy is subject to any specific provisions of the Municipal Act, or other relevant legislation or Union agreement.

- (a) Obtain the assistance of a co-worker; and/or,
- (b) Obtain the assistance of Caretaker/Maintenance staff (and/or dolly).

2.8 Office Equipment Safeguarding

2.8.1 Operation:

- (a) Prior to operating any office equipment, ensure that the equipment is operational and that training in the proper use has been provided;
- (b) Paper cutters when not in use shall have the cutting blade down, guarded with a latch to secure the blade. When using the paper cutter, one hand shall be positioned on the handle and the other holding the paper, be cautious when cutting as the paper may shift; and,
- (c) When using a paper shredder, ensure that long hair is tied back and that loose-fitting clothing (e.g. ties) are far enough from the shredder opening. Only paper should be placed in the shredder and no more than the maximum number of pages as per the machine's specifications.

2.8.2 Lock-Out and Maintenance:

In accordance with the City of Dryden Lock-out/Block-out Policy & Procedure (HR-HS-36), all equipment is to be turned off and unplugged prior to performing any maintenance on it. Copiers, printers, binding machines, and laminators shall be used and maintained as per the manufacturer's directions.

Employees that use equipment shall:

- (a) Know the procedures for safely clearing jams;
- (b) Be aware of areas which may be hot; and,
- (c) Remember to disconnect power prior to opening any components of the machine/equipment.

2.9 Electrical Safety

All employees shall:

- (a) Shut off electrical equipment not in use;
- (b) Ensure all equipment and extension cords are properly equipped with grounding prongs;
- (c) Ensure electrical cords are visually inspected on a periodic basis to identify frayed and worn cords;
- (d) Maintain electrical cords in areas out of walkways and passageways;
- (e) Avoid extension cords in office areas;
- (f) Ensure surge protectors are not overloaded and not used as an 'extension cord' for other office equipment;
- (g) Ensure that outlets are not overloaded;

- (h) Ensure that combustible material, such as paper, is not stored on or in close proximity to electrical outlets and connections; and,
- (i) Ensure that no items are stored in front of any electrical panels.

2.10 Chemical Safety

All office employees shall be trained in WHMIS 2015 and the safe use of chemicals as per City of Dryden Policies & Procedures and will know:

- (a) The location of the WHMIS 2015 SDS binder that applies to their workplace;
- (b) How to read and understand WHMIS 2015 labels and pictograms;
- (c) How to read and understand WHMIS 2015 SDS; and,
- (d) How to control the hazards.

Employees will also take precautions according to label warnings and directions on consumer products that are not governed by WHMIS 2015 regulations.

2.11 Ergonomics

In general, the following summary of ergonomic best practices will be applied. For more detailed information and recommendations, refer to the City of Dryden's Policy and Procedures on Ergonomics (HR-HS-05):

- (a) The best distance for a computer monitor is as far away as possible while still being able to read it clearly. Eyes should line up with the top third of the screen;
- (b) The computer mouse should be placed at the same level and close to the keyboard to maintain a neutral wrist/arm position;
- (c) A footrest should be available for situations where the keyboard height cannot be adjusted, and it is necessary to adjust the chair upwards. It is preferable to have the chair and work surface low enough to have the feet rest on the floor to promote frequent changes in leg positions;
- (d) Keyboard height should be at elbow height or slightly lower in order to keep the wrist and hand in line with the forearm (90°). This straight neutral posture reduces stress and strain on tendons and muscles;
- (e) Generally, wrist rests should be used during pauses in keyboarding;
- (f) Research supports the idea of very short breaks taken very frequently, for example, a 30 second break every 10 minutes;
- (g) Shared workstations should provide maximum adjustment features to accommodate individual human factors (user size differences and preferences); and,

- (h) One product will not fit all. Several different models should be available to employees when choosing replacement items such as ergonomic chairs. When choosing an ergonomic chair, choose a chair with the following features:
 - (i) A backrest, which is shaped to support the lower back;
 - (ii) A stable base with at least 5 legs/casters of support;
 - (iii) Controls that can be accessed while seated;
 - (iv) A set pan length that allows for clearance between the front edge of the seat and the back of the legs; and,
 - (v) Adjustments for seat height, armrest height and width, and backrest height.

2.12 Thermal Comfort

- (a) In general, "thermal comfort" means that a person wearing a normal amount of clothing feels neither too cold nor too warm. Thermal comfort is important both for one's well-being and for productivity. It can be achieved only when the air temperature, humidity and air movement are within the specified range often referred to as the "comfort zone";
- (b) Temperature preferences vary greatly among individuals and there is no one temperature that can satisfy everyone. Nevertheless, an office which is too warm makes its occupants feel tired; on the other hand, one that is too cold causes the occupants' attention to drift, making them restless and easily distracted; and,
- (c) A general recommendation for overall comfort is that the temperature be held constant in the range of 21-23°C (69-73°F). In summertime when outdoor temperatures are higher it is advisable to keep air-conditioned offices slightly warmer to minimize the temperature discrepancy between indoors and outdoors.

2.13 Scents and Fragrances

- (a) Some employees are sensitive or allergic to the chemicals or ingredients used in perfumes, colognes, aftershaves, body sprays, scented hand creams, essential oils, and other scented products, so wear or use these substances with restraint. Each department, in conjunction with the HR department, may have their own specific restrictions on these products.

History			
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