

ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY SAFETY POLICY COMMITTEE

OFFICE SAFETY POLICY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION:

This section identifies potential hazards encountered in normal office environments and precautions to be taken to minimize these hazards.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES:

2.1 Supervisors must ensure that all personnel under their direction know and follow the requirements of this section. Supervisors must ensure that all personnel under their direction are aware of the potential health and safety hazards associated with the equipment they use and the tasks they perform.

2.2 Employees must maintain their offices in an orderly condition, free from unnecessary combustible material and tripping hazards. Employees should report to their supervisors promptly any unsafe work conditions or unsafe acts they observe.

3.0 GENERAL GUIDELINES:

3.1 The tops of cabinets, file banks, and bookcases over five feet high must be kept clear of all materials during all times. Do not stack or place items such as: supplies, books, papers, files, bottles, boxes, house plants, fans, equipment, or tools on top of the file cabinets. Placing such items will have the potential to cause injury if the material is dislodged and falls.

3.2 All open shelves above six feet in height should be installed with a 1-inch lip if there is a possibility of objects becoming dislodged and falling.

3.4 Only one file cabinet drawer should be open at a time to avoid the possibility of overturning the cabinet.

3.5 File cabinets should be filled from the bottom drawer up to avoid cabinets becoming top-heavy.

3.6 Unstable file cabinets, unstable storage cabinets, and unstable bookcases must be secured to the wall. Until such time as a cabinet can be secured to the wall, a label stating "Caution – cabinet not secured" should be affixed. Labels are not a permanent alternative to securing cabinets.

3.7 Items (plants, mobiles, etc.) must not be suspended from ceiling tile supports. Exempted from this prohibition is the temporary (less than 1 day) attachment of photographic flash equipment weighing less than 5 pounds to ceiling grids with clamps manufactured for that purpose.

3.8 It is recommended that a 22" clearance be maintained for an internal egress path (e.g., between a worker's desk and the exit). All aisles and walkways must be kept free and unobstructed.

3.9 Loose carpeting should be secured and loose threads should be cut.

- 3.10 Avoid leaning past the limit in spring-loaded swivel chairs because they overturn easily. New swivel chairs must have a five-wheel star base.
- 3.11 Furniture should be checked for sharp edges, burrs, or damaged places that may cause cuts or snags.
- 3.12 Damaged equipment and furniture must be taken out of service and either repaired or replaced.
- 3.13 Hands and fingers should be kept clear of pinch points before closing desk or file drawers.
- 3.14 File/desk drawers, bookcases, and cabinet doors that do not retract completely must be closed when not in use to avoid trip and bump hazards.
- 3.15 Staples and staple removers should be used carefully to avoid flying staples and punctured fingers.
- 3.16 Paper cutters must be provided with proper guards to avoid finger injuries. When not in use, the cutting blade must be locked in the down position.
- 3.17 A step-stool or roll-away platform ladder should be used when it is necessary to reach for an object.
- 3.18 Razor blades should be used only in proper holders. Razor blades, knives, scalpels, scissors, or other sharp instruments must be carefully stored after use to avoid cuts.
- 3.19 When disposing of sharp items, place them in a sharps container or make sure all sharp points or edges are protected (e.g. wrap in paper or cardboard and secure with tape) before placing in a trash container.
- 3.20 Avoid carrying items of excessive weight (e.g., books, papers, or equipment). Loads should not obscure vision. Wheeled carts should be used for transporting loads. Contact Facilities for handling or transporting heavy loads.
- 3.21 Office or laboratory doors with an existing viewing window must have a clear 20 square inch viewing space between 42" and 60" in height to allow emergency personnel to inspect the space. This requirement does not apply to laser laboratories or dark rooms.
- 3.22 All injuries must be reported to the Supervisor or through calling IIT Public Safety at 312-808-6363 or 911 in emergencies.
- 3.23 Malfunction of equipment (mechanical or electrical) must be reported to supervision for proper repair or replacement. The faulty equipment should be labeled "out of service" and secured to prevent inadvertent use.
- 3.24 Laboratory chemicals, chemical samples, radioactive materials or sources, or any other hazardous materials should not be brought into or stored in office areas.

- 3.25 Office supplies such as cleaners, toners, correction fluid or board erase, should be stored separately from food, beverages, or eating utensils, and in a manner that prevents spills or contamination.
- 3.26 All food should be stored in closed containers to prevent attracting vermin. Facilities should be contacted about insect or pest complaints.
- 3.27 Refrigerators in offices should be labeled “Food Only.”

4.0 ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT:

Employees should be protected against potential electrical equipment hazards in an office. In most cases, hazards can be reduced by using UL listed equipment, installing sufficient capacity, well-located receptacles, and arranging cords and outlets to avoid tripping hazards.

- 4.1 Poorly maintained, unsafe, poor quality, and/or non-UL listed electrical equipment is prohibited.
- 4.2 For information on space heaters management, see Illinois Institute of Technology Policies and Procedures Handbook Procedure No. B.5.
- 4.3 Cords for electrically operated office machines, fans, lamps, and computers should be properly installed and visually inspected regularly for frayed, cut, or exposed wires.
- 4.4 Sparks or smoke indicates the electrical system is malfunctioning and needs repair. A 911 call should be placed and the equipment should be taken out of service.
- 4.5 Electrical cords should be routed to avoid contact with sharp edges or pinch points.
- 4.6 To minimize tripping hazards, avoid routing cords across walking areas. If this is not possible, use of plastic electrical cord cover is required.
- 4.7 Electrical plugs must be fully engaged in the outlet to eliminate the hazard of short circuiting caused when metal objects like paper clips, measuring tape, and similar items come in contact with the exposed blades of the plug.
- 4.8 An electrical cord must always be pulled from an outlet by the plug and never by the cord.
- 4.9 Coffee pots and hot plates must be placed where they will not be upset, dislodged, inadvertently touched, or come in contact with combustible materials.
- 4.10 For installation or repair of electrical equipment, or the reset of a tripped circuit breaker, a qualified worker (usually Facilities Maintenance) should be contacted.
- 4.11 Equipment should be secured or located so that it will not be inadvertently dislodged and fall to the floor.

5.0 CONTAMINATION

A special hazard exists for those employees who work in research laboratories. Contamination (i.e., radiological or chemical) can be carried from the laboratory to the office on soles of shoes. Therefore, such individuals should adhere to precautions specific to their workplace.

6.0 RECYCLING AND REUSE OF MATERIALS:

Employees are encouraged to consider waste minimization and pollution prevention in all areas of their work, as well as the reuse and recycling of materials.

7.0 APPROVAL:

The IIT Safety Policy Committee has reviewed this Policy and recommended its adoption on October 7, 2013, and this Office Safety Policy is approved and effective this 10th day of October 2013. The Safety Policy Committee will review the contents, implementation and effectiveness of this Policy no less than annually (but as often as necessary) and will make modifications as necessary to ensure that it meets all required legal and regulatory requirements and is adequately providing a safe and healthful environment for IIT faculty, employees and students. Any modification to this Policy have been reviewed and approved, and are effective as of the date noted on the cover page.

By: /s/ Alan W. Cramb

Provost and Senior Vice President

By: /s/ Bruce Watts

Vice President for Facilities & Public Safety

Appendix A

OFFICE SAFETY CHECKLIST:

This checklist may be used as a tool to identify potential hazards in office environments.

1. Is the office in an orderly condition?
2. Is the office free from unnecessary combustible material?
3. Is the office free from potential tripping hazards?
4. Are the tops of cabinets, file banks, and bookcases over five feet high clear of items that have the potential to cause injury if they are dislodged and fall?
5. Do open shelves above six feet have 1-inch lips if items on them could be dislodged and fall?
6. Are all file drawers, bookcases, and cabinet doors closed when not in use?
7. Are all unstable file cabinets, storage cabinets, and bookcases secured to the wall?
8. Are all material stored at least 18" below the sprinkler heads?
9. Are ceiling tiles and ceiling supports free of items?
10. Is proper clearance maintained for the path of egress?
11. Are all cords kept out of walkways or covered with a cord protector?
12. Is all carpeting secured to the floor?
13. Is all furniture free of sharp edges and in proper working order?
14. Do paper cutters have blade guards?
15. Is the blade on the paper cutter secured down when not in use?
16. Are razor blades being used in proper holders?
17. Are razor blades properly stored when not in use?
18. Are carts used to transport items when needed?
19. Do office doors with existing windows have 20" square of clear viewing window between 42" and 60" high?
20. Is the workstation set up properly?
21. Are electrical cords warm to the touch?
22. Are chemicals being stored properly?

23. Is food being stored properly?
24. Are refrigerators properly labeled "Food Only?"
25. Has malfunctioning or defective equipment been properly taken out of service?
26. Are workers protected against potential electrical hazards?
27. Do space heaters have tip-over protection switches?
28. When the space heater is in use, are all combustible items kept at least three feet from the front, sides, and rear of the heater?
29. Are only computers and other sensitive items plugged into surge-protected multi-outlet strips?
30. Are all cords properly installed and free of defects?
31. Are electrical cords routed to avoid contact with sharp edges or pinch points?
32. Are electrical plugs fully engaged in the outlet?
33. Are coffee pots and hot plates properly placed to avoid contact with combustible materials?
34. Is equipment properly secured or located so that it cannot be inadvertently dislodged and fall?