

Employee Working from Home/Telecommuting

An office in the home has safety concerns similar to working in an office building minus the commuting/travel. Ideally the home office should be in a separate room or area of the home set aside for this purpose. Ventilation, heat and air-conditioning should be provided for employee comfort.

The employee's supervisor should discuss expectations for on and off duty hours, office equipment supplied by the company, communication connections, security protection for company documents and electronic data and extra remuneration. Expectations should be in writing and signed by the employee.

As a follow-up the supervisor should complete an inspection of home work site to ensure it meets expectations and all safety concerns. The supervisor should document this inspection.

Safety concerns

Employee Ergonomics Evaluation

- Provide a good ergonomically designed chair.
- Check desk height.
- Verify that computer keyboard is ergonomically designed (Working, greater than two hours per day on a lap top computer key board is not ergonomically safe); provide a docking station for improved ergonomics.
- Check that computer monitor is positioned for line of sight at the top three lines of monitor and within a comfortable viewing distance.
- Verify that mouse is within minimal reach.
- Printer/fax should be within easy reach.
- Telephone should be within reach (Head set used for phone calls over 2 minutes).
- Workstation setup and exercises are available

Lighting

- Lighting levels are sufficient for the type of work performed; 70 to 200 foot-candles.

Electrical

- Use of electrical extension cords should be discouraged. Instead provide for sufficient permanent electrical outlets, fuse protected (15 to 20 amp) and use of a good quality power surge protection strip.
- Turn off computer and electrical equipment when not in use. This could be altered when information may be received 24 hours a day.

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Trip/Fall

- Provide for floor area that is free of tripping hazards; smooth floor covering, rugs lay flat, no electrical cords, books/paper/office supplies are placed off the floor on stable shelving.

File cabinets and shelves

- Secured to each other or the wall to prevent tipping. When file drawers are open they should not block the walkway toward the exit.

Emergency

- ABC rated fire extinguisher mounted near exit path from work area.
- Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for office printing inks, copy machine, fax machine, etc. Review for safe handling, use of personal protective equipment, and exposure prevention actions.
- Emergency call-in procedure to supervisor.

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