

COMMON OFFICE SAFETY HAZARDS

To address any electrical, structural, and/or design safety issue within your immediate office space or outside of the space including hallways, common areas, stairwells, etc., please notify the AOC, landlord, or building maintenance staff.



ELECTRICAL:

- Power cords, plugs, and electrical outlets must not be damaged or frayed.
- Three-prong plugs must have their ground prong in place.
- All electrical wires must be covered leaving no bare wires exposed.
- Outlets near wet surface areas such as bathrooms or kitchens must have functioning Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI). *See picture below.*
- Test GFCI outlets periodically using the test button. Reset the unit by pushing the reset button. See [video tutorial](#).



Example of GFCI

- Modular furniture with electrical outlets must have covers over all wires.
- Extension cords cannot be used to make permanent wiring connections.
- All power strips should be plugged directly into outlets and not “daisy-chained” (plugged in a series).

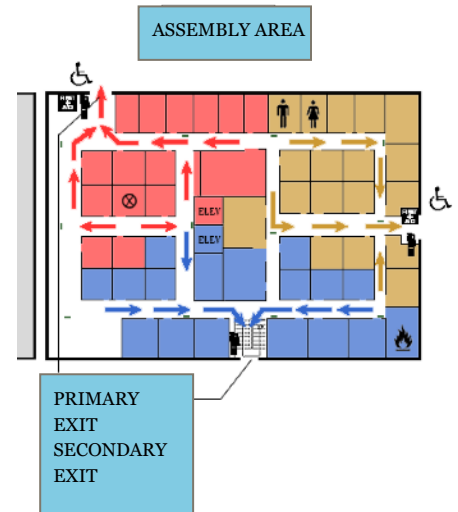
- Plug appliances directly into grounded outlets, appropriately sized for power supply.
- There should be a 36" clearance in front of all electrical panels.
- Electrical equipment and appliances must be approved by a Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory.
- Electrical panel doors must be closed. If open, DO NOT APPROACH. Immediately notify appropriate party (AOC/landlord/maintenance staff).

CHEMICAL SAFETY:

- Safety Data Sheets (SDS) must be available for all hazardous chemicals located in the workplace.
- Chemical containers must be properly labeled and kept closed when not in use.
- Follow label or SDS instructions for all chemicals used in the workplace.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE:

- Emergency Action Plans must be in place and all employees must be trained on the plan. This includes an up-to-date emergency telephone list, including first responders.
- Emergency duties should be assigned to employees according to the office’s Emergency Action Plan.
- Employees must know where to go when required to evacuate the building or “shelter in place.”
- Exit routes must be adequate, i.e., 18 inches for a single person and 28 inches or more for multiple persons.
- Each office must have enough exit routes to enable employees to evacuate safely.



Evacuation Map

- Exit doors designated as emergency exits cannot be obstructed. Aisles, stairways, and hallways must be kept clear of obstructions that could block egress and exit from the building.
- All areas must have functional emergency lighting.
- Exit signs must be working and visible in all conditions and locations.
- Office annunciators must be working properly, kept charged, and reset after each emergency.



Immediately report any malfunctioning alarms and/or office annunciators to the appropriate entity.

- First Aid supplies should be available in the absence of a close-by infirmary, clinic, or hospital. If you elect to have a kit, contents must be up to date.



ENVIRONMENTAL:

- Keep workplaces free from clutter and debris that could cause fire, rodent, or vector problems (i.e., certain insects that transmit disease).
- Floors should be clean, dry, and free from tripping hazards.
- Lighting should be adequate to allow employees to see their work without eye strain.
- Properly identify areas containing asbestos and properly maintain surfaces to minimize fiber releases.

MACHINE GUARDING:

- Portable fans should have fan-blade guard openings of .5-inch diameter or less.
- Paper cutters must have a finger guard in front of the blade arm, and blade arm tension must be adjusted to prevent free fall.

SLIPS, TRIPS, FALLS:

- Rungs and feet of portable ladders and steps of stools should be supplied with non-slip material.
- Cords, wires, and cables should not run across aisles, walkways, or exit route pathways.
- Carpets and rugs must be secured and in good condition.

- Practice good housekeeping by immediately cleaning up spills.
- Stairways should have non-slip treads and proper lighting.
- Keep walking surfaces dry during inclement weather.

MATERIAL STORAGE:

- Secure materials stored on overhead racks and ensure that racks are attached to walls.
- Heaviest items should be loaded in the bottom of file drawers to prevent the cabinet from tipping.
- Drawers of file cabinets should not be left standing open.
- Secure heavy items on top of shelves.
- Have step stools or ladders available to reach high places.

FIRE:

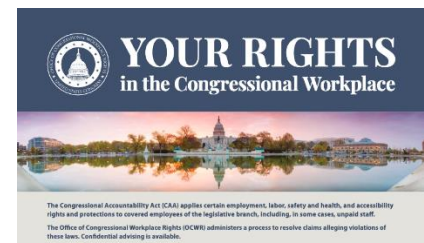
- Make sure that items are stored no closer than 18 inches under sprinkler heads.
- Ensure that fire extinguishers within your office space are fully charged, have monthly and annual tags affixed, and are not damaged. Contact the appropriate entity to correct issues.
- Fire extinguishers, pull stations, exit signs, and strobe lights must be visible and accessible.
- Store combustible materials away from ignition sources, exit stairwells, and electrical closets.
- All ceiling tiles should be intact.
- Plug space heaters directly into outlets and ensure that they are equipped with tip-over switches.



- Cords and wires should be protected from damage and pinch points and not run through ceilings, doorways, walls, or other openings, or under rugs or chair mats.
- Fire doors must not be blocked, locked, or obstructed, and must be free from flammable materials such as posters and fliers.
- Use flame retardant draperies.
- Fire doors must be working properly and close securely.
- All fire wall penetrations must be sealed.
- All stairways, corridors, and exits should be clear of obstructions.
- Fire sprinklers should be in good condition and free from corrosion.

WORKPLACE:

- “Your Rights in the Congressional Workplace” poster should be placed in an area visible to employees.



NEED HELP WITH AN ISSUE?

Contact:
House Service Center at
(202) 225-4141 or
Senate Service Center at
(202) 224-3141

For more information on workplace safety under the Congressional Accountability Act, call (202) 724-9250 or visit ocwr.gov

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