FACT SHEET

Berkeley UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA ™

EH&S OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND SAFETY

Office Safety

Your office may seem like a harmless place to work, but it may contain potential hazards. Identifying the dangers and correcting the problems can help ensure a safe work environment.

This document will provide a brief introduction to the topic and highlight unique features and/or safety considerations. Additional information about office safety can be found through the University Health Services' **Be Well at Work** Faculty and Staff Health Program, and on the **EH&S website**.

Jump to:

Fire Safety | Ergonomics | Electrical Safety | Waste Disposal | Workplace Safety Program | Building Emergency Plan

General Safety

Heavy Objects – Prevent back injuries by knowing how much you can lift safely and by getting help when needed. To learn more about safe lifting techniques, contact the **Wellness team at University Health Services**.

Unsafe Ladders – Never stand on a table, counter, or chair with wheels when reaching for items overhead. Always use a sturdy stool or stepladder.

Loose Electric Cords – Keep wiring organized and out of walking areas to prevent tripping. Don't put wiring under carpets. This conceals frayed cords and increases the risk of fires.

Slippery Floors – Clean up spills on the floor to prevent slipping. Use non-slip backing beneath throw rugs to avoid sliding.

File Cabinets – Don't place file cabinets where people are liable to walk into open drawers. Do not overload top drawers and create a top-heavy file cabinet that could topple. Keep files loosely packed to prevent hand and wrist injuries.

Broken Equipment – Do not use broken or unguarded equipment (such as a paper cutter without a finger guard). Mark the equipment **unsafe** and report it to your supervisor.

Unstable Furniture – Heavy equipment and furniture over 4 feet tall should be braced to prevent tipping and injuring anyone or blocking exits during an earthquake.

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Fire Safety

Fire Doors – Do **not** prop open self-closing, fire-rated corridor doors. They can resist flames and keep smoke out of corridors only if they are kept closed.

Blocked Exits – Be sure you know the location of more than one emergency exit and that nothing blocks your egress.

Fire Equipment – Be aware of the location of the closest fire alarm and fire extinguisher. Employees that are expected to use this equipment may sign up for **Live Fire Extinguisher Training** at the Hazardous Materials Facility.

Ergonomics

Workstation – If you work at a computer for four (4) hours a day or more, have your workstation evaluated by your department's Computer Workstation Evaluator to help identify and correct ergonomic problems.

Video Display Terminals (VDT) – VDT users are encouraged to have periodic eye examinations by their personal physician. While working, take a five-minute break away from your computer every half hour. Take standing breaks at least hourly when sitting in your office for prolonged periods.

Visit **University Health Services' Faculty & Staff Ergonomics** page to find more detailed information regarding campus ergonomics and contact information for the Ergonomics team.

Electrical Safety

Extension Cords – Extension cords should be used for temporary (less than 30 days) power only. To install permanent wiring, email all details of the request to **Facilities Services**.

Multiple Power Strips – Do not use power strips in multiple combinations.
> **DANGER: Never plug a power strip into another power strip or an extension cord.**

Electrical Outlets – Do not use adapters to plug grounded (3-prong) plugs into ungrounded (2-prong) outlets. Find a grounded outlet and/or contact **Facilities Services** to install additional permanent wiring.

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Waste Disposal

Computer Monitors – **Donate working electronics** to ReUSE. For broken electronics, **Excess and Surplus** provides a **free electronic waste (E-waste) disposal service**.

Toner – Send toner cartridges (re-packed in their original packaging) to **Campus Mail Services**. Empty toner cartridges may be thrown in the trash. If you have an unwanted full container, do not throw it in the trash. Please log into the **Hazardous Waste Program** to create a waste label and to request a pickup. If you are an infrequent user of the HWP web site, **EH&S staff will assist you**.

Batteries | Campus Generated Batteries – Please log into the **Hazardous Waste Program** to create a waste label and to request a pickup. If you are an infrequent user of the HWP web site, **EH&S staff will assist you**.

Batteries | Home Generated Batteries – UC employees should take their home-generated batteries to their **community recycling center** rather than disposing of them on campus.

Batteries | Disposal Through a Third-Party Vendor – If you are not submitting the disposal request through EH&S and are using a third party vendor, make sure you are following all regulatory requirements and retain a copy of your shipping records for at least 3 years.

Household Chemicals – Empty household chemical containers (for example, for correction fluid or furniture polish) can be disposed of as common trash. Non-empty containers must be disposed of by EH&S. Please log into the **Hazardous Waste Program (HWP)** to create a waste label and to request a pickup. If you are an infrequent user of the HWP website, **EH&S staff will assist you**.

Other Chemicals – Please log into the **Hazardous Waste Program (HWP)** to create a waste label and to request a pickup. If you are an infrequent user of the HWP website, **EH&S staff will assist you**.

Aerosol Cans – If the container is completely empty of liquids and pressure, you may dispose of it using a regular trash receptacle. Partially filled and/or pressurized containers must be disposed of by EH&S. Please log into the **Hazardous Waste Program** to create a waste label and to request a pickup. If you are an infrequent user of the HWP website, **EH&S staff will assist you**.

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Workplace Safety Program

The campus **Workplace Safety Program (WSP)** establishes health and safety practices to prevent work-related injuries and illnesses. It contains detailed guidelines, principles, procedures, and resources for avoiding and reporting injuries and illnesses associated with your work-related activities. The WSP is based on the **Campus Injury and Illness Prevention Policy (IIPP)**, and provides the means of IIPP implementation.

Workplace Safety Program training is a one-time mandatory training module that is required of all campus employees (faculty, staff, and student) offered through the UC Learning Center.

Building Emergency Plan

A Building Emergency Plan (BEP) describes evacuation procedures and other safety practices in a building. Employees should receive documented training on their department's BEP and know where it is kept.

Employees should know:

- Their Building Coordinator's (BC) Name
- What the BC's role is during a building or campus emergency
- Their personal role during a building or campus emergency
- The location of the building's Emergency Assembly Area (EAA)