

VERO ENERGY INC.

Section 11 – Office Safety



Table of Contents

11.0 OFFICE SAFETY	3
11.1 PURPOSE	3
11.2 RESPONSIBILITIES	3
11.3 STANDARDS.....	3
11.4 IMPLEMENTATION	3
11.4.1 GENERAL OFFICE SAFETY.....	4
11.4.2 OFFICE ERGONOMICS.....	6
11.4.3 WORKING ALONE	9
11.4.4 WORKPLACE DESIGN	10
11.4.5 WORK SITUATIONS AND INTERACTIONS	10
11.4.6 THREAT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE	11
11.5 MONITORING	13
11.6 REVIEW/FOLLOW-UP	13

11.0 OFFICE SAFETY

11.1 PURPOSE

Why do we need to do this?

Despite common beliefs that the office provides a safe environment in which to work, many hazards exist which cause thousands of injuries and health problems each year among office workers. It is estimated in the United States that office workers sustain 76,000 fractures, dislocations, sprains, strains, and contusions each year. The leading types of disabling accidents that occur within the office are:

- Falls
- Strains and over-exertion
- Struck by or striking objects
- Caught in or between objects.

In addition, office workers are also injured as a result of foreign substances in the eye, spilled hot liquids, burns from fire, and electric shock.

This section outlines the minimum standards for the protection of office workers.

11.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

Who has to do this?

Management is responsible and accountable for assessing the office environment, identifying any existing or potential hazards and controlling the hazards.

Management is also responsible for ensuring personnel are aware of the hazards in the office and that steps are taken to reduce the risk to a level that is reasonable and practical for the work being done.

11.3 STANDARDS

Where does it say we have to do this?

OH&S Legislation:

Alberta OH&S Code –Part 2 – Hazard Assessment, Elimination and Control
Alberta OH&S Code –Part 8 – Entrances, Walkways, Stairways and Ladders
Alberta OH&S Code –Part 12 – General Safety Precautions
Alberta OH&S Code –Part 27 – Violence
Alberta OH&S Code –Part 28 – Working Alone

11.4 IMPLEMENTATION

How will we make sure this is put into place?

11.4.1 GENERAL OFFICE SAFETY

Employees are responsible for complying with office and other safety procedures and/or exercising sound judgement in their work practices.

All office equipment shall be operated and maintained as required by the various laws, codes, regulations or manufacturer instructions.

Surprisingly, there appear to be more accidents in the "safe offices" than there are in industrial plants. While it is just as easy, and just as dangerous, to trip over an unclosed file drawer as it is to trip over an object left on a plant floor, office workers are less careful because they think that the office is a completely safe place to work. But in both places a leg could be broken. Industrial workers are much more aware of the job hazards than office workers. In fact, the office worker rarely gives safety a thought as offices are thought to be safe places to work.

In the office there are many opportunities to become injured. Some of these include back injuries from lifting, falling from chairs or step ladders, tripping over open drawers, cords or objects on the floor, being pinched or cut on equipment and being cut by paper.

Lifting

- ❖ Plan ahead.
 - Know your strength. When in doubt make it a two person job.
 - Make sure you have a place to put the heavy object, that doors are open and obstacles are out of your way before you start.
 - Always make sure your footing is secure.
- ❖ Lift and carry the right way.
 - Use your arm and leg muscles, not your back. Keep your back straight and the load close to your body.
 - Grasp the object firmly. Hold it so that your fingers won't be pinched if the load shifts.
 - Make sure you can see. Have plenty of light and be able to look over your load.
 - Set the object down using your arm and leg muscles. If it is a box, rest one corner first so that the hands don't get caught underneath.

Avoid Falls

Most office falls are on a level floor and can be eliminated.

- ❖ Avoid overloading top drawers of filing cabinets. This could bring the cabinet down on you.
- ❖ Keep filing and desk drawers closed when not in use.
- ❖ Keep the floor clean. Pick up everything. Even a small pencil can cause someone to trip and fall. Remove all cords or securely tape them down.
- ❖ Don't read while walking.
- ❖ Clean up wet spots from beverages or water.
- ❖ Don't wear cuffs that are too long or shoes that are untied.
- ❖ Don't stand on chairs; use a ladder or step stool.
- ❖ Purchase five-legged office chairs.

Use Ladders Properly

- ❖ Use a step ladder, not a chair or drawer, when reaching for something high.
- ❖ Always face toward the ladder when going up or coming down.
- ❖ Stay off the top two steps unless you have a handrail.
- ❖ Move the ladder rather than reaching out to one side.
- ❖ Always keep one hand on the ladder. Big items cannot be carried safely. Have someone pass them to you.
- ❖ Make sure that the spreader is open and the ladder feet are level on the ground.
- ❖ Only one person at a time should climb a ladder.

Avoid Machine and Equipment Accidents

- ❖ Keep your fingers out of openings when closing drawers or doors.
- ❖ Read the instructions or listen to oral instructions carefully. Never use machines you don't know how to operate.
- ❖ Make sure that the mechanical guards are in place every time you use a machine. If you remove a guard temporarily, be sure to replace it before you turn on the switch.
- ❖ Turn machines off while adjusting them or when not using them.
- ❖ Be alert for electrical hazards. If a machine overheats, smokes or sparks, or if you feel even a slight shock, unplug it and call a service man.
- ❖ Watch your clothes. Long sleeves, scarves, ties, hair, dangling jewelry or even key chains are dangerous around machines with moving parts.
- ❖ Check the machine position before use. See that word processors, computers or any other machines are firmly on the working surface.
- ❖ Open packages the safe way.
 - Inspect for sharp projections and rough edges.
 - Cut away from the body.
 - Use the right tools for the job.

Avoid Cuts and Punctures

- ❖ Keep pointed objects in a box or drawer (pointed end down) where they can't stab you.
- ❖ Do not test a jammed stapler by holding the thumb over the end.
- ❖ Store razor blades or razor blade knives in covered containers. Be careful when disposing them.
- ❖ Don't try to cut too many sheets of paper at once in a paper cutter.
- ❖ Use rubber finger guards when working with stacks of paper. Use a sponge or sealing device to moisten stamps or envelopes.
- ❖ Sweep pieces of broken glass up instead of picking them up by hand, and then wrap the pieces in paper. Glass splinters can be picked up with a damp towel.

Housekeeping

Housekeeping makes work easier and conditions safer because the work area is clean, materials are arranged properly and used materials are properly disposed of.

- ❖ Place any shipping or packing materials in the proper garbage container.
- ❖ Store chemicals and flammables carefully. Make sure they are labeled and sealed in approved containers. Use WHMIS workplace labels if required.
- ❖ Put knives and shears away after use.
- ❖ Keep heavy cartons at floor level out of walkways.

11.4.2 OFFICE ERGONOMICS

Vero Energy Inc. wants to ensure that your work environment is set up to minimize your risk of discomfort or injury. In other words, we want to ensure you are as comfortable as possible in your home away from home.

Your workstation has been set up with some basic ergonomic principles in mind. Please use the guidelines given to fine-tune your workstation to meet your individual needs. These practical hints can also be used when working at home.

What is Ergonomics?

Ergonomics is the science of designing and arranging the tools in your environment to ensure that you are interacting with these tools in the safest, most effective manner.

What Are Ergonomic Hazards

- ❖ Repetitive and forceful motions;
- ❖ Awkward postures;
- ❖ Poor workstation set up; and
- ❖ Inadequate rest periods.

How Can Ergonomic Hazards Affect Me

Ergonomic hazards contribute to injuries of the muscles, tendons, joints and nerves. Common complaints from employees include headaches and pain or discomfort in the neck, shoulders, back and wrists.

Keeping a **neutral body posture** (i.e. avoiding long reaches, bending of your neck, back and wrists too far forward or backward and excessive twisting) will help you to avoid injury.

Frequent (every 10-15 minutes) **short breaks** (1/2 minute to 3 minutes) reduce discomfort and improve productivity. Doing stretches during these short breaks can further reduce discomfort.

Varying your tasks and changing positions throughout the day promotes blood circulation and gives your muscles and spine a rest.

Adjust your workstation according to these helpful hints to reduce your risk of discomfort or injury.

Feet

- ❖ Fully supported on the floor or on a foot rest.

Knees

- ❖ Level with or slightly lower than your hips.
- ❖ Back of knees not touching the edge of your chair.

Shoulders

- ❖ Relaxed.
- ❖ In line with your ears and hips.
- ❖ Stretch: Roll your shoulders forward three times and backwards three times.

Back

- ❖ Supported against the back of your chair with lumbar support.
- ❖ Back tip: If you use your back rest all day, lean forward occasionally to allow the fluid in your discs to move in and out of the discs. This helps to keep the discs healthy.
- ❖ Stretch: While standing, support your back with your hands just above your buttocks and gently stretch backwards.

Phone

- ❖ Keep your phone close by, preferably on your non-dominant side.

Phone Tips

- ❖ Do not rest your phone between your ear and your shoulder.
- ❖ Use a headset or speaker phone if you need to have your hands free to access your computer or desk work while on the phone.
- ❖ Stretch: Standing up to answer your phone is a good opportunity for a stretch and a good way to promote blood circulation.

Elbows

- ❖ Close to your body and bent at 90 degrees.
- ❖ In this position, your keyboard and mouse should fall just under your fingers.

Wrists

- ❖ Straight; avoid excessive twisting or bending.

Fingers

- ❖ In a gentle curve when typing or mousing.
- ❖ Typing tip: Avoid banging on the keyboard.

Wrist (Palm Rest)

- ❖ If you rest your wrists on your hard desk surface or desk edge while typing, a wrist rest will provide a softer surface for your wrists and help you to maintain a straight wrist while typing or mousing.
- ❖ Ideally, you should not have your wrists resting on any surface all day. Type with a straight wrist and use a wrist rest to rest your arms and shoulders when you pause typing.

- ❖ A wrist rest should be wide and soft to avoid putting excess pressure on the carpal tunnel (the coin sized tunnel in your wrist which is a passageway for tendons and median nerve as they pass from the arm into the hand).

Mouse

- ❖ Keep as close as possible to avoid extending your arm.

Mousing Tips

- ❖ Don't use your wrist to operate your mouse like a windshield wiper. Use your arm to move the mouse.
- ❖ Don't hover over the mouse.
- ❖ Let your hand relax when not using the mouse.
- ❖ Alternate hands when mousing. This may be difficult at first, but will prevent you from using one hand excessively.

Eyes

- ❖ Level with the top of your monitor screen (or level with the top third of your monitor screen if your monitor is larger than 18").
- ❖ Eye tip: If you wear bifocals, be sure to adjust your monitor so that you do not have to bend your neck forward or backward to view your monitor comfortably.
- ❖ Stretch: Staring at one object (i.e. computer screen) for long periods of time can strain your eyes. Give your eyes a break by focusing on a distant object or cupping your hands over your eyes for a few seconds.

Light

- ❖ Reducing glare from your monitor screen will prevent eye strain.
- ❖ Work with your monitor perpendicular to a window and close your blinds if necessary.
- ❖ Use task lighting as required for desk work, but avoid shining the light on your monitor screen.

Document Holder

- ❖ For single sheets: use a document holder and place it level with and adjacent to your monitor to avoid twisting and bending your neck.
- ❖ For books, binders, and pages that you flip through quickly, place a slant board between your keyboard and monitor

Heavy Binders and Books

- ❖ Keep frequently used materials on lower, easy to reach shelves

Tips for working on a laptop computer:

Laptops are special ergonomic hazards because they are not adjustable. When working with a laptop computer:

- ❖ Minimize glare from overhead lighting and windows;
- ❖ Increase the font size;
- ❖ When working in a hotel or airplane, elevate the computer with magazines or pillows so it is at the same height as the armrests of the chair;
- ❖ Take breaks and stretch; and
- ❖ Consider using an external plug-in mouse and keyboard.

Tips for hunt and peck typists

- ❖ Place your documents on a slantboard between the keyboard and the monitor.
- ❖ Maintain good posture.
- ❖ Use the armrests of your chair to support your elbows.
- ❖ A wrist rest may be useful if you find you are resting your wrists on the desk while searching for keys.
- ❖ If you have to type a lot, consider taking a keying course.
- ❖ Don't bang on the keyboard. Using a light touch keyboard might help.

11.4.3 WORKING ALONE

- ❖ Working before and after business hours, especially in offices, will be discouraged.
- ❖ Let your manager/co-workers/spouse know you are working late and when you expect to leave. Provide them with the office number that bypasses the answering service so they may contact you.
- ❖ Use the buddy system. Arrange to work late the same night as a co-worker.
- ❖ Notify your supervisor if you notice any suspicious activity in or around your workplace or if you encounter any incidents.

Physical Signs of a Potentially Violent Person

Use caution if someone exhibits one or more of the following non-verbal signs or body language:

- ❖ Red faced or white faced;
- ❖ Sweating;
- ❖ Pacing;
- ❖ Restlessness or repetitive movements;
- ❖ Trembling or shaking;
- ❖ Clenched jaws or fists;
- ❖ Facial grimacing;
- ❖ Exaggerated or violent gestures; and/or
- ❖ Change in voice.

Warning Sign or Bad Day?

Take these behaviours "in context". Look for multiple warning signs and signs of escalation.

Personal Safety

Emergency Preparedness

- ❖ Know where to access telephones, including local pay telephones;
- ❖ Know worksite emergency exits and procedures;
- ❖ Imagine appropriate responses to various situations you may find yourself in;
- ❖ Decide ahead of time how you will respond to various situations; and
- ❖ Compare procedures with your co-workers.

Trusting Your Instincts

Keep personal information at a minimum when talking with anyone who makes you feel uncomfortable (i.e. vacation plans, hours of work, where you live, phone numbers, etc.).

If you feel you are being harassed, threatened or intimidated:

- Tell the person to stop;
- Document the incident; and
- Inform your supervisor or manager.

Dealing With Strangers

- ❖ Adopt a non-threatening, "May I help you?" attitude towards visitors in the workplace.
- ❖ Escort strangers to the location or person they identify as their destination, if you are comfortable doing so.
- ❖ Report strangers to your supervisor/manager.
- ❖ DO NOT open the door to strangers before or after regular business hours.

Elevator Safety

- ❖ Do not get on the elevator with anyone who makes you feel uneasy. Wait for the next elevator.
- ❖ Get off the elevator if a suspicious person gets on with you.
- ❖ Stand near the control panel when entering an elevator.
- ❖ If someone or something makes you feel uncomfortable, push the button for the next floor or push the alarm.

11.4.4 WORKPLACE DESIGN

- ❖ Use established control access systems to company buildings.
 - Ensure control of distribution of keys, alarm codes and pass cards.
 - Change alarm codes or locks immediately if compromised.
- ❖ Use adequate exterior lighting around the workplace and near entrances.
- ❖ Strategically place fences to control access to the workplace.
- ❖ Locate garbage areas, external buildings or equipment that employees may have to access in an area:
 - With good visibility;
 - Close to the building; and
 - With no potential hiding places.

11.4.5 WORK SITUATIONS AND INTERACTIONS

Opening the Office

- ❖ Look for loiterers.
- ❖ Check for any signs of an attempted entry.
- ❖ If in doubt or if the premises are not secure, DO NOT ENTER. Advise on-call supervisor immediately.

Threats Against Employees

All threats against employees are serious. Depending on the situation, some or all of the following measures may be appropriate.

If the threat was made by a client, supplier or the public:

- ❖ - Immediately inform your manager;
- ❖ - Formally advise the client regarding contact with the threatened employee; and
- ❖ - Re-assign the employee.

Debriefing and/or counseling will be provided to the employee and his or her family if necessary.

11.4.6 THREAT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

Bomb Threat Procedures

Receipt of Telephone Call of a Bomb Threat

Bomb threats fall into two categories:

- ❖ **Specific:** where the caller provides detailed information describing the device, its exact location, time it is set to go off and why it was placed.
- ❖ **Non-specific:** where the caller makes a simple statement to the effect that a device has been placed. Generally, very little additional information is provided.

Whether the threat is specific or non-specific the information obtained and recorded is one of utmost importance and will assist in the preservation of life and property. The information received by the person taking the call may be instrumental in the apprehension and conviction of the caller.

The person receiving call should attempt to get the exact location within building, where bomb has been or is going to be planted and as much information as possible as to the description of the caller. Information received should be carefully recorded for the proper authorities.

- ❖ Listen carefully to the caller. Write down exactly what is being said.
- ❖ Be calm and courteous.
- ❖ Do not interrupt the caller.
- ❖ Obtain as much information as possible.
- ❖ Ask the caller the following questions and write down the response:
 - What time will the bomb explode?
 - Where is it located?
 - What does it look like?
 - Why did you place the bomb?
 - Where are you calling from?
 - What is your name?

- ❖ List any identifying characteristics:
 - Is the caller male or female?
 - Estimate the caller's age.
 - Any accent? (i.e. English, French, etc.)
 - Voice tone (soft, loud)
 - Speech (fast, slow)
 - Diction (good, nasal, lisp)
 - Manner (calm, emotional, vulgar)
- ❖ Listen for background noise:
 - Was the caller's voice familiar to you?
 - Was the caller familiar with the area?
- ❖ Relay the information to the manager.
- ❖ Advise the Police.

Bomb Threat Left on an Answering Machine

- ❖ In the event a bomb threat is left on an answering machine after hours, remove the tape, store it in a safe place and notify the required personnel immediately.
- ❖ Instructions to evacuate the premises will come from the police.

Receipt of Letter or Card of a Bomb Threat

- ❖ Follow the procedure as listed above. Preserve the letter or card for further investigation by the proper authorities.

When a Bomb Threat is Received

- ❖ Notify the VP, Engineering. Advise the police.
- ❖ Upon receipt of the threat, the VP, Engineering shall cause the building to be evacuated by sounding the alarm.
- ❖ The wardens shall be advised by a runner system or other means that the elevator may be used for evacuation purposes.
- ❖ Duties of the Emergency Response Plan and the actions of the building occupants shall be those specified in the event of a fire, with the exceptions noted above.
- ❖ The VP, Engineering and the wardens shall rendezvous at the meeting area and await the arrival of the police department.
- ❖ The police department shall take charge of the situation upon their arrival and in consultation with the VP, Engineering.
- ❖ The wardens shall advise the building occupants of the nature of the alarm and the tentative re-entry time.

If a Real or Suspected Device is Found

- ❖ Do not touch or attempt to remove or disturb the device.
- ❖ Advise the police department who shall be responsible for summoning the bomb disposal team.
- ❖ Entire building to be evacuated immediately including search teams.
- ❖ Have a person stationed at or near the building control centre for the purpose of showing the bomb disposal team the location of the real or suspected bomb.
- ❖ After proper disposal of the real or suspected bomb or after the building has been searched, and upon advice of the police authority that the building is safe, the Manager or their assistant shall give the "all clear" signal for personnel to return to their respective duties.

11.5 MONITORING

How will we check to see that this is carried out?

Management, supervisors and site representatives are responsible and accountable for ensuring workers are provided with a safe and secure office environment. Office safety procedures will be reviewed with office workers periodically during staff meetings.

11.6 REVIEW/FOLLOW-UP

When will we review this component for continuous improvement?

Vero Energy Inc.'s standards and requirements for office safety will be reviewed as part of the regular review of the Health and Safety Management System, whenever the applicable Occupational Health and Safety legislation is updated or in the event of a serious incident.