



Office danger zone...

The office may not seem to be the most hazardous of workplaces, indeed compared to factories, plants and construction sites it is not. However approximately 2,000 office workers are absent from work for more than three days every year because of a workplace accident and in one year alone, the HSE reported 17 deaths to office-based employees in the UK.

Office injuries can arise as a result of trips over trailing cables and other obstacles on the floor, slipping on worn or broken steps, and injuries from inappropriate lifting.

Slipping and tripping injuries account for nearly half of major injuries in a HSE report and just under 30% of over-3-day injuries. Over one quarter of non-fatal injuries involved stairs or steps. Slips, trips and falls, often occur when staff are transporting or carrying loads and are the cause of many office accidents. They result from poor floor condition, inappropriate lighting and untidiness. Trailing leads, spillages, worn floor coverings and carpets and obstructions in passageways and corridors all contribute to these type of accidents.

The most common kind of accident (representing 30% of over-3-day injuries) according to the HSE was manual handling, lifting or carrying. Nearly 25% involved portable containers including bottles, crates, etc. The British Safety Council stated that around a third of all accidents in the banking and finance sector which require absence from work were due to poor manual handling.

This might all seem rather obvious, but in offices with increasing work demands it is not surprising that complacency creeps in and eventually somebody gets seriously injured. This is why Unite, in conjunction with Vox (the PPP staff forum), are encouraging all AXA staff to be more alert and proactive when it comes to looking out for hazards and making sure they report them using the online facility on the company intranet.

Don't leave it to someone else, if you spot a problem - report it. If you are involved in an accident or a near miss - report it. Don't leave a potential accident until someone is hurt.



Caution!

Don't leave it until somebody has an **accident** or is **injured**. Take a regular look around your working environment to identify **potential hazards**.

- are there any **loose wires** or **cables**?
- Is there any **worn** or **damaged carpet**?
- Is stationary and other **potential trip items** stored on the floor, either under desks or in a walkway?
- Does any of your **electrical equipment** appear to give off too much **heat**?
- Has all your **electrical equipment** been **tested** and approved?
- Do you know where the **fire exits** are?
- Are all **fire exits** clear of **obstructions**?

... an accident waiting to happen!

Find out more: www.axa-unite.org