

## INSTRUCTION 13

### GENERAL OFFICE SAFETY

References:

- A. Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- B. Provision and use of Work Equipment Regulations (as amended).
- C. Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (as amended).
- D. Health and Safety (Manual Handling Operations) Regulations (as amended).

#### Introduction

13.1 The potential hazards to be found in the office environment cannot be over emphasised. They range from electrical hazards to slip and trip hazards and in most cases Display Screen Equipment is covered in a separate instruction.

#### Responsibilities

13.2 Office Managers and supervisors have the responsibility within their own areas for office safety and are to ensure that unsafe practices such as overloading of electrical sockets, dangerously laid electrical cables and incorrect use of office furniture are eliminated.

13.3 All employees in turn are responsible for their own safety and the safety of others in the office environment by adopting good housekeeping practices:

#### High Level Access

13.4 If you find it necessary to obtain something from a shelf or cupboard, ask a colleague who is taller to help you or use a set of kick steps or a step ladder.

#### Desk and Chairs

13.5 Do not swing back on your chair. Close drawers after use, so that you and your colleagues do not walk into them.

#### Filing Cabinets

13.6 Most filing cabinets have safety devices to prevent staff from opening more than one drawer. Those that are not fitted with these devices should be secured to the wall. Nevertheless it is good practice to never open more than one drawer at a time. If possible, place heavier objects in the bottom or lower drawers.

#### Corridors and Staircases

13.7 All corridors form part of the means to escape in the event of fire. These must be kept clear at all times.

13.8 Do not use Fire extinguishers to wedge doors open.

13.9 When natural light is insufficient, ensure that electric lights (where available) are switched on.

## **Floor Coverings**

13.10 Watch out for loose or turned up floor coverings. Report hazards to the supervisor or manager of the office/building.

## **Spillages**

13.11 If you spill something on floors or stairs, ensure that it is wiped up immediately. Likewise if you discover spilt fluid, don't just leave it there for your colleagues to slip on.

## **Wires, Cables and Flexes**

13.12 Tripping over loose wires is one of the major causes of accidents in offices. Ensure that all cables are securely fastened and kept well away from any area where people may walk.

## **Guillotines**

13.13 Guillotines must be fitted with a guard to prevent fingers getting cut. Never operate a guillotine without the appropriate guard securely fixed in place. Report any unguarded guillotines immediately to your manager or supervisor.

## **Shredding Machines**

13.14 Ensure all loose items of clothing e.g. tie, long hair and loose sleeves are away from the shredding machine opening prior to operation.