

HEALTH & SAFETY NEWSLETTER

ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH & SAFETY – AUGUST 2019

What's new?

The [Office Position Hazard Assessment \(PHA\)](#) has been posted on the EH&S website. If you primarily work in offices or classroom spaces, take a minute to review the PHA to learn about common office hazards and how you can keep yourselves and others safe.

Although office and instructional jobs are low risk positions, there are still hazards around campus that you should be aware of. They may be physical, ergonomic, psychological, chemical, and/or biological and can lead to injuries or illness.

Examples of office-based hazards include:

- Items stored unsafely (e.g too high and/or on uneven surfaces)
- Items blocking doorways, which can make access, egress, or escape difficult
- Overloaded electrical circuits or unattended space heaters, which can lead to a fire
- Poor housekeeping, such as dust build up or food debris which can affect air quality or lead to pest infestations
- Ergonomics, such as repetitive motion or long periods of sitting

Perform regular workplace inspections to identify new hazards, assess risks, and monitor existing hazard controls to ensure they remain effective.

Informal inspections are as simple as scanning your workplace when you arrive to make sure the space is free of hazards and safe to work in. If you see a simple hazard that you are able to control (e.g. coffee spill, housekeeping issue, small appliances left on), you can fix it yourself. If the repair is outside of your scope (e.g. large or hazardous spills, broken furniture, electrical or plumbing issues), bring the concern to your direct supervisor or submit a Frontline request to have an expert repair it.

Looking for more information on office safety?

The Canadian Centre of Occupational Health & Safety (CCOHS) is a trusted advisor on health and safety topics across Canada.

Below are links from the CCOHS with useful office safety information:

- [General Office Safety](#)
- [Office ergonomics quick fact sheets](#)

Alberta Occupational Health & Safety

Under Alberta Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) legislation, it is everyone's responsibility to keep the workplace free of hazards. Do your part in the community and be mindful of the safety of yourself and those around you.

Safety Moment

Keep yourself and your workplace clean to reduce the risk of injury or illness!

Maintain a clean work space and remove contaminated clothing and wash your hands after completing a task to reduce the spread of contaminants across the University.

Contaminated clothing may include, but is not limited to:

- Lab coats - remove when leaving the lab (may be kept on if going directly from one lab to another or if moving hazardous materials from one space to another)
- Work gloves - remove before touching door knobs, especially in communal spaces
- Coveralls - clean regularly to minimize dust and debris
- Respirator masks - replace cartridges / filters and clean regularly as recommended by manufacturer

If you have suggestions on future newsletter content, please email ehs@mtroyal.ca with your suggestion. We would love to hear from you!

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