

# Occupations and Workplaces

## Office - General

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## What does an office worker do?

Office staff may type or file documents, correspondence, reports, statements and other material. Their workstation usually has a computer/laptop/keyboard and telephone, among other equipment.

The main duties of an office worker include:

- Answer telephone or personal enquiries.
- Photocopy and collate documents.
- Maintain and update filing, inventory, mailing and database systems.
- Open, sort and route incoming mail and courier packages.
- Process reports, applications, receipts, expenditures and other documents, using a computer.

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## What are some health and safety issues for office workers?

Office environments present a number of hazards, including:

- Perfumes and other [scents](#) (potential allergens).
- In some cases, exposure to cleaning products.
- [Indoor air quality](#) or exposure to toxic substances.
- [Sitting](#) for long periods of time.

- Working in from [awkward positions](#), or performing [repetitive manual tasks](#).
  - [Lifting](#) awkward or heavy objects.
  - [Eye strain](#).
  - Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) from excessive [computer](#) use or improper ergonomic situations.
  - Improperly adjusted [chairs](#).
  - Working in uncomfortable [temperatures](#).
  - Annoying or distracting [noise](#) and vibration from electronic equipment.
  - [Slips, trips and falls](#).
  - Injuries from falling files or other objects
  - Cuts from office tools such as scissors, mail openers, etc.
  - [Risk of violence](#).
  - [Working alone](#).
  - [Stress](#).
  - [Bullying](#).
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## What are some preventive measures for office workers?

- Learn about how to avoid musculoskeletal pain or injury from [repetitive](#) or physically awkward tasks. Take breaks as needed.
  - Learn safe [lifting](#) techniques.
  - Keep all work areas clear of clutter.
  - Set-up your workstation ergonomically. Have a competent person assess your workstation for ergonomic issues.
  - Know how to relax strained body parts by doing correct [stretching](#) exercises.
  - Know emergency evacuation plan and procedures.
  - [Know personal or individual risk factors](#).
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## What are some good general safe work practices?

- Follow company safety rules.
- Learn fire safety.

- Learn about chemical safety, [WHMIS](#) and [MSDSs](#).
  - Know how to [report a hazard and near miss](#).
  - Practice safe [lifting](#).
  - Follow [good housekeeping](#) procedures.
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