

 CSN Procedure	Finance & Administration
Category: Environmental Health and Safety	Effective Date: 05/01/2026
Office Safety Guidelines	

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to provide safety guidelines for office and administrative work areas at the College of Southern Nevada (CSN). Office environments present common hazards including electrical risks, slip and trip hazards, fire hazards, and ergonomic concerns. This procedure is intended to promote a safe and healthy work environment and to protect employees, students, and visitors.

II. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all CSN office spaces, administrative areas, classrooms used as offices, and cubicle workstations across all sites owned and operated by CSN.

III. PROCEDURE

A. Responsibilities

1. Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S)
 - Administer and periodically review this procedure.
 - Provide guidance regarding office safety standards and requirements.
 - Review reported safety concerns and incidents as necessary.
 - Conduct periodic inspections of office and administrative areas.
 - Provide training resources and ergonomic guidance.
2. Facilities Management
 - Respond to maintenance requests related to office safety hazards.
 - Ensure office spaces are maintained in safe and functional condition.
 - Address structural, electrical, or equipment concerns that pose safety risks.
3. Supervisors
 - Ensure employees maintain safe and orderly work areas.
 - Verify that employees complete required safety training.
 - Identify and help address workplace hazards in a timely manner.
 - Report unresolved safety concerns to EH&S.
4. Employees
 - Maintain a safe, clean, and organized workspace.
 - Report unsafe conditions or hazards to their supervisor or EH&S.
 - Complete assigned safety training.
 - Follow the safety guidelines outlined in this procedure.

IV. GENERAL OFFICE SAFETY GUIDELINES

A. Storage

- Stack boxes and materials in a stable and secure manner to prevent shifting or collapse.

Unless otherwise specified at the beginning of this procedure, printed copies of this procedure are UNCONTROLLED.
Always ensure prior to use you are using the most current copy.

- Avoid overloading shelves, especially with heavy items.
- Maintain at least 18 inches of clearance below ceilings and fire sprinkler heads.
- Store heavier items on lower shelves to maintain stability.
- Use step stools or ladders when retrieving anything above shoulder level. Furniture, cardboard boxes, upturned trash bins, and office chairs are not acceptable ladder substitutes.

B. Electrical Safety

- Electrical cords and plugs must be maintained in good condition and should not be frayed, spliced, or repaired with tape.
- Do not overload power strips or plug them into one another (no daisy chaining).
- Plug high-draw appliances such as refrigerators, microwaves, and toasters directly into a dedicated wall outlet. Avoid plugging these appliances into an extension cord.
- Use extension cords for temporary needs only; if a permanent power source is needed, submit a Work Order request to Facilities Management.
- Route electrical cords to prevent trip hazards; do not run cords under rugs, mats, or through doorways.
- Personal appliances such as space heaters and fans should be used with caution, plugged directly into wall outlets, and unplugged when not in use. The space heaters must be Underwriter Laboratory (UL) approved and equipped with an automatic shut-off device that will shut off if the heater tips over.
- Report damaged cords, outlets, or electrical equipment to Facilities Management.

C. Housekeeping

- Keep work areas free of clutter, accumulated paper, and excess combustible materials.
- Keep walkways, corridors, exits, and cubicle pathways clear and unobstructed.
 - Workstation pathways should generally maintain at least 28 inches of clearance.
 - Egress routes should ideally allow for at least 36 inches of width to support accessibility.
- Clean up spills and remove slip or trip hazards promptly.
- File cabinet and desk drawers should remain closed when not in use to prevent tip hazards.
- Do not block access to life safety equipment (e.g., AEDs, first aid kits, fire extinguishers, fire pull stations, fire sprinklers, fire alarm notification devices, exit signs, emergency lights).
- Keep shared office refrigerators clean and safe:
 - Maintain refrigerators at 40°F or below; freezers at 0°F or below.
 - Store food in sealed containers labeled with name and date.
 - Discard perishable food after 3–4 days.
 - Never leave perishable food at room temperature for more than 2 hours.
 - Spills should be cleaned up immediately with hot, soapy water.

D. Fire Prevention

- Do not store flammable or hazardous materials in office spaces unless approved by EH&S.
- Avoid covering windows with decorations or materials that could create safety concerns.
- Open flames, including candles and incense, are strictly prohibited in office areas by the Nevada State Fire Marshal.
- Employees should be familiar with the location of fire extinguishers, pull stations, and emergency exits in their work area.
- Keep exit doors and pathways clear at all times.
- Do not prop or wedge open the fire doors. Fire doors must remain closed and be able to automatically close upon fire alarm activation. Do not obstruct or disable them.
- Do not hang or attach anything to fire emergency equipment (e.g., fire sprinklers, smoke detectors, emergency lights).

E. Office Equipment

- Report damaged office chairs, desks, or other furniture for repair or replacement.
- Store sharp instruments (e.g., scissors, letter openers, box cutters) safely when not in use.
- Ensure lighting in work areas is adequate for assigned tasks; report deficiencies to Facilities Management.
- Operate printers, copiers, and other shared equipment according to manufacturer guidelines.
- Be sure to take precautions when operating paper shredders:
 - Keep hands, jewelry, loose sleeves, neckties, lanyards and/or long hair away from moving parts.
 - Shred small quantities of paper to avoid jams and overheating.
 - If the shredder motor overheats, turn the paper shredder off and allow the motor to cool for about 15 minutes before using it again.
 - Turn off and unplug before clearing jams, emptying bins, or performing cleaning.

F. Ergonomics

- Arrange workstations to promote neutral body positioning, including proper monitor height, chair adjustment, and keyboard placement.
- Keep frequently used items within easy reach to minimize repetitive stretching or twisting.
- Employees experiencing discomfort or pain related to their workstation setup should notify their supervisor to request an ergonomic evaluation with EH&S.
- Maintain ergonomic equipment provided by CSN in good working condition.
- General guidelines for safer lifting:
 - Get your body warmed up and stretch prior to the lift.
 - Assess the object's weight and inspect it for hazards.
 - Keep the lifts in your power zone (i.e., above the knees, below the shoulders, and close to the body), if possible.
 - Use a staggered stance while lifting, place feet shoulder width apart with one foot slightly back and turned outward to improve your balance and decrease the risk of a back strain.
 - Crouch close to the object.
 - Grab the object with a full palm grip.
 - Keep your back as straight as possible.
 - Lift with your legs.
 - Do not twist your body while the load is being lifted/transported, pivot with your feet instead.
 - When setting the object down, lower the load by bending the legs and crouching with the back straight. Take care when releasing the load to prevent injury to fingers, hands, or feet.
 - Ask for assistance when moving heavy or awkward items.

G. Indoor Air Quality

- Position office equipment, especially photocopiers, away from workstations and in well-ventilated areas when possible.
- Avoid using air fresheners, candles, and other strongly scented products in poorly ventilated areas.

H. General Awareness

- Call University Police Department (UPD) for all on-campus emergencies (7-911 on campus phone, 702-895-3669 from a cell phone).
- Be aware of [emergency procedures](#) for your building (evacuation, fire, etc.).
- [Report](#) injuries, near misses, or unsafe conditions as soon as possible.

- Do not attempt to handle situations outside your training (e.g., electrical repair, hazardous materials).

V. AUTHORITY AND REFERENCES

CSN Ergonomics Program

https://www.csn.edu/sites/default/files/pdf_file/0025/157327/Ergonomics-Program.pdf

CSN Emergency Preparedness

<https://www.csn.edu/emergencypreparedness>

CSN Incident Reporting

<https://www.csn.edu/csn-incident-reporting>

Nevada Department of Public Safety, State Fire Marshal Division – Fire Safety Notice

<https://fire.nv.gov/uploadedfiles/firenv.gov/content/Resources/OpenFlameFireSafetyNotice-11052008.pdf>

Occupational Safety and Health Act (General Duty Clause)

<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/oshact/section5-duties>

OSHA 29 CFR 1910 Subpart D – Walking-Working Surfaces

<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910SubpartD>

OSHA 29 CFR 1910 Subpart S – Electrical Safety Standards

<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910SubpartS>