

Home is Where the Risk Is



Topics

- Background
- Potential Hazards in the Home
- Employee Responsibilities
- Employer Responsibilities
- Risk Management
- Safety Considerations



Work from Home Statistics, 2023

- 59.1% of employees work entirely on-site
- 28.2% work a hybrid model
 - Some physical presence in the workplace
- 12.7% of employees work entirely from home
- 98% of workers expressed the desire to work remotely
 - 65% - want to work remotely 100% of the time
 - 32% - would prefer a hybrid schedule



OSHA's Regulations for Working from Home



All workers have the right to:

- A safe workplace.
- Raise a safety or health concern with your employer or OSHA, or report a work-related injury or illness, without being retaliated against.
- Receive information and training on job hazards, including all hazardous substances in your workplace.
- Request a confidential OSHA inspection of your workplace if you believe there are unsafe or unhealthy conditions. You have the right to have a representative contact OSHA on your behalf.
- Participate (or have your representative participate) in an OSHA inspection and speak in private to the inspector.
- File a complaint with OSHA within 30 days (by phone, online or by mail) if you have been retaliated against for using your rights.
- See any OSHA citations issued to your employer.
- Request copies of your medical records, tests that measure hazards in the workplace, and the workplace injury and illness log.

This poster is available free from OSHA.

Contact OSHA. We can help.



Employers must:

- Provide employees a workplace free from recognized hazards. It is illegal to retaliate against an employee for using any of their rights under the law, including raising a health and safety concern with you or with OSHA, or reporting a work-related injury or illness.
- Comply with all applicable OSHA standards.
- Notify OSHA within 8 hours of a workplace fatality or within 24 hours of any work-related inpatient hospitalization, amputation, or loss of an eye.
- Provide required training to all workers in a language and vocabulary they can understand.
- Prominently display this poster in the workplace.
- Post OSHA citations at or near the place of the alleged violations.

On-Site Consultation services are available to small and medium-sized employers, without citation or penalty, through OSHA-supported consultation programs in every state.



All workers have the right to:

- A safe workplace.

Employers must:

- Provide employees a workplace free from recognized hazards.

This means ALL workplaces, even those that are home-based.

1-800-321-OSHA (6742) • TTY 1-877-889-5627 • www.osha.gov

OSHA's Requirements of a Home Office

Work limited to typical office work & equipment

- filing, computer research, writing, telephone work
- office equipment, file cabinet, copy machine

OSHA will not:

- inspect employees' home office worksites
- require that employers inspect employees' home offices

Employers are responsible at home worksites for hazards caused by materials, equipment, work processes:

- that they provide
- that they require be used in employees' homes

OSHA's Requirements of Other Home-Based Worksites

Other work includes home assembly or manufacturing operations.

OSHA will inspect if it receives a complaint or referral indicating:

- safety or health violation threatening physical harm
- imminent danger exists including work-related fatality
- inspection is limited to location of work activities only

Report & recordkeeping of home work-related injuries & illness

Must be work-related

- Occurs while the employee is being paid to work
- Directly related to the employee's work duties

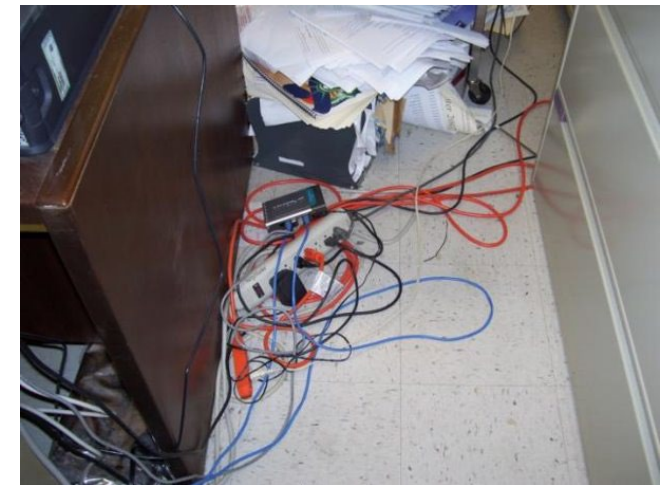
Topics – Home Hazards

- Background
- **Potential Hazards in the Home**
- Employee Responsibilities
- Employer Responsibilities
- Risk Management
- Safety Considerations



Potential Home Hazards

- Slips, trips and falls
- Improper ergonomic design
- Electrical wiring
- Environmental stresses
 - Temperature
 - Noise
 - Lighting
- Distractions in the home



Other Potential Home Hazards

- Home assembly equipment
- Hazardous materials use/storage
- Threats from others
 - Home break-in
 - Confrontation with outsider
- Work-related stress
- Being alone during an emergency



Home Hazards: Emergencies

Medical incidents:

- Heart attack, diabetic reaction, breathing difficulties

Incidents could include:

- Falls, electric shock, cut, struck-by events

Fire alarm or sprinkler system activation.



Topics – Employee Responsibilities

- Background
- Potential Hazards in the Home
- **Employee Responsibilities**
- Employer Responsibilities
- Risk Management
- Safety Considerations



Employee Responsibilities

- Ensure an adequate workspace that is safe and hazard-free.
- Maintain workspace so work can be done efficiently/comfortably.
- Follow safety requirements including periodic training sessions.
- Maintain household electrical system in good working order.
- Keep employee-provided equipment in good working order.
- Report any equipment needing repairs or maintenance.
- Report hazards, incidents, or injuries immediately to the supervisor.

Topics – Employer Responsibilities

- Background
- Potential Hazards in the Home
- Employee Responsibilities
- **Employer Responsibilities**
- Risk Management
- Safety Considerations



Employer-Provided Equipment

- Clearly outline what equipment will be employer-provided.
- Quality must be equal to that provided to non-remote employees.
- Must be fit for the purpose it is being used for.
- Maintenance of equipment must be performed, as needed.



Telework Agreements

- Created to explain company policies
- Employee/employer responsibilities need to be made clear
- Employees should review and verify their understanding
- Should contain an employee safety self certification
- Should be periodically reviewed and kept up to date



Topics – Managing Risks

- Background
- Potential Hazards in the Home
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- Employer Responsibilities
- **Risk Management**
- Safety Considerations



Job Safety Analysis

- Break a job down into its individual tasks
 - Perform a hazard analysis of each key step
 - Determine potential hazards and methods of reducing risks
- Regularly revisit these assessments as changes occur
- Create policies that will keep employees safe
- Conduct training on the requirements of that plan
- Include possible emergency situations



Safety Checklist for Home Worksites

Example of a telework agreement used for PA workers.

- [Telework Agreement \(pa.gov\)](#)
- Telework Safety Assessment Checklist: page 10

Example of telework agreement used for federal employees

- [2021 Guide to Telework and Remote Work in the Federal Government \(opm.gov\)](#)
- Safety Checklist for the Home Work Space: pages 49-50

Topics – Home Safety Considerations

- Background
- Potential Hazards in the Home
- Employee Responsibilities
- Employer Responsibilities
- Risk Management
- **Safety Considerations**



Considerations When Working from Home

- Is the workplace away from noise, distractions and devoted to the employee's work needs?
- Does the workspace accommodate a workstation, equipment and related material?
- Are file drawers heavy and can they open into walkways?
- Is temperature, ventilation and lighting adequate?
- Is there a reliable method of communication with emergency services or the employer (landline phone or cell phone)?

Slips, Trips, and Falls Prevention

- Are floors clear and free from hazards?
- Are phone lines and electrical cords secured under a desk or along a wall?
- Are all stairs equipped with a handrail?
- Are carpets/area rugs secured to the floor and free of frayed or worn seams?
- Are loose-fitting clothes being worn which can contribute to a trip and fall?
- Is lighting adequate to ensure there are no areas that are very dark or difficult to see within?
- Are shoes being worn? Socks can present a slip hazard.

Electrical Hazard Prevention

- Are sufficient electrical outlets accessible?
- Is computer equipment plugged into a surge protector?
- Is equipment turned off when not in use?



Even 110 Volts Can Seriously Injure or Kill

- Check electric cords often for damage. Have damaged cords repaired right away. Worn cords can cause shock, short circuit or fire.
- Pull the plastic housing of the electric plug to take it out of the wall socket; never pull on the cord.
- Do not overload electric outlets with too many items plugged in at once.
- Water and electricity do not mix. Do not operate electric appliances such as radios or hair dryers near a bathtub or sink full of water.

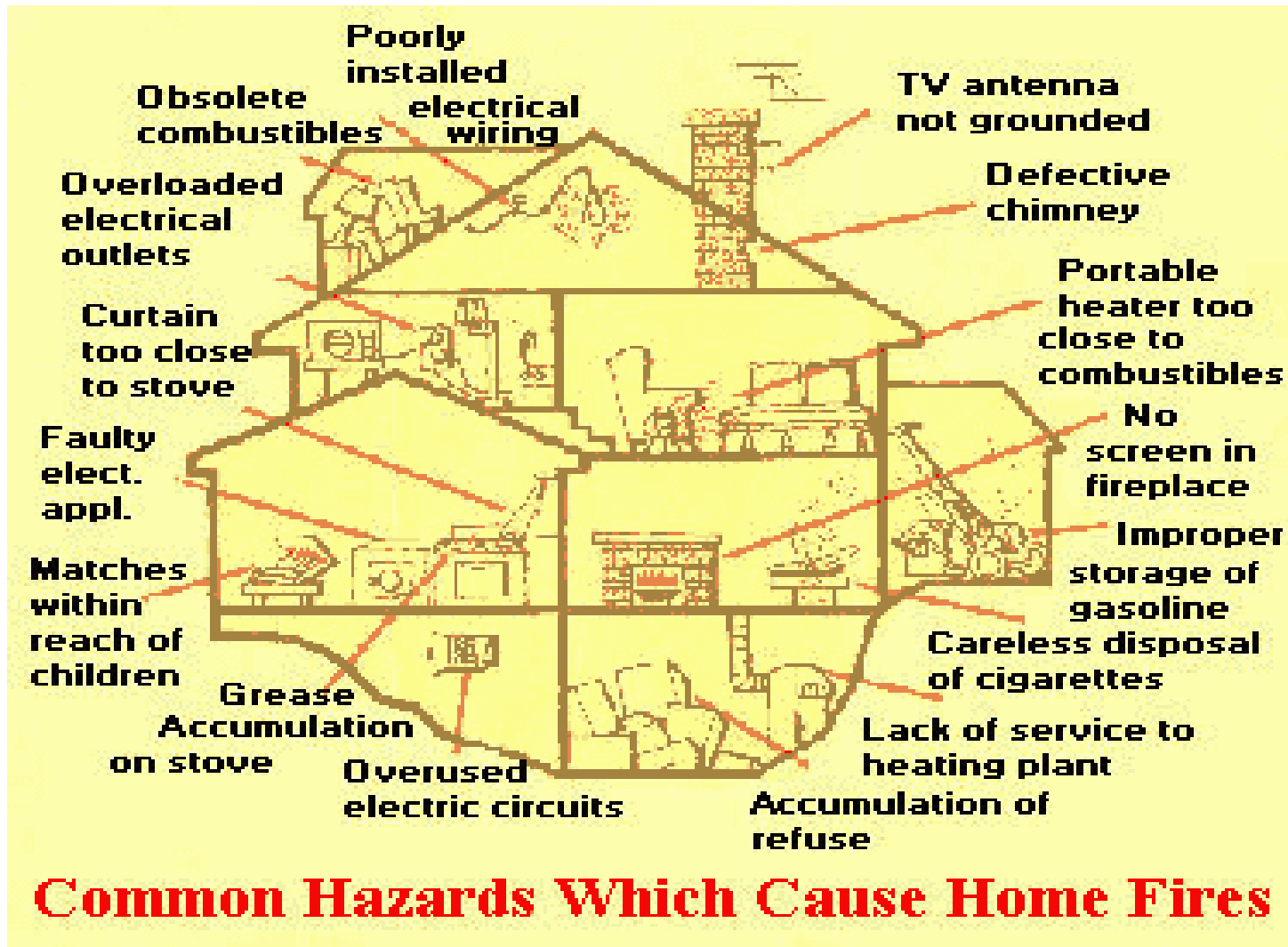
Electrical Safety

- Unplug any appliance that emits sparks or that does not work properly.
- Always unplug an appliance before cleaning or repairing it.
- Always unplug the toaster or other appliance when removing a piece of stuck food.
- Remember that a turned-off appliance is still connected to electricity until it is unplugged.

Fire Safety

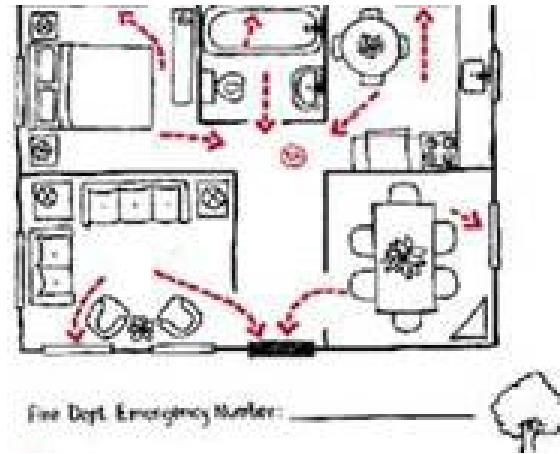
- In a recent period U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 358,500 home fires each year:
 - Does the home have working smoke detectors in the workspace area as well as the rest of the home?
 - Is a multi-use fire extinguisher readily available and does the employee know how to use it?
 - Are exits, walkways and aisles unobstructed?
 - Is the workplace free of trash, clutter and flammables?
 - All radiators and portable heaters located away from flammable/combustible items?
 - Is there an evacuation plan in case of a fire or other emergency?

Inspect Home Areas



Home Escape Plans/Drills

- Make a plan and train on it



- Have a designated meeting place outside for all family members



Train on Home Escape Plans/Drills



Precautions with Children



Unattended Cooking Hazards



Ergonomic Safety

Ergonomic issues can lead to painful musculoskeletal disorders (MSD's)

- Are the workspace chair wheels secure?
- Are the rungs and legs of the chair sturdy?
- Is the chair adjustable?
- Is the employee's back supported by a backrest?
- Are the employee's feet flat on the floor or supported by a footrest?
- Is there enough room at the workspace desk?
- Is there sufficient light for reading/working?

Ergonomic Safety, Page 2

- Is the computer screen free from noticeable glare?
- Is the top of the screen at eye level?
- Is there space to rest the arms while not keying?
- Are the employees arms and legs at a 90 degree angle while using the computer?
- Is the telephone close by so the employee does not have to reach for it?

Ergonomic Safety, Page 3

- Are heavy items stored between the top of the knee and shoulder?
- When lifting is there any bending at the waist instead of the knees?
- When carrying items is visibility maintained?
- After lifting are items kept close to the body?
- Can a secure grip be maintained?

General Lighting Safety

- Are work areas, kitchen counters, desks, workbenches, garages, laundry rooms and basements well-lit?
- Are outlet and switch covers in good condition so no wiring is exposed?
- Are outlet or switch plate hot to the touch? If they are this can indicate an unsafe wiring condition.
- Is there discoloration present at/above switch plates or outlets? This can indicate a potentially dangerous heat buildup at these connections.
- Do any light switches work intermittently? This can indicate loose wiring or an internally cracked device.

General Lighting Safety, page 2

- Make sure all lamps and light fixtures are certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), Canadian Standards Association (CSA), or Intertek (ETL).
- Always use a bulb of the correct type and wattage.
- If you do not know the correct wattage, contact the manufacturer of the lamp or fixture. A bulb with excessive wattage may overheat and cause a fire.
- Install bulbs with extended lifespans in hard-to-reach locations to limit the number of times you have to climb a ladder, move furniture, or engage in potentially dangerous activities.

General Lighting Safety, page 3

- Read and follow manufacturers' safety instructions for fixtures, lamps, and light bulbs.
- Make sure bulbs are screwed in securely. Loose bulbs may overheat.
- Do not allow children to operate lamps or nightlights.



General Safe Chemical Handling

- Read the warning label.
- Be sure to understand and follow what it says on how to use the product safely, how to protect yourself when using it and how to properly store it.
- The manufacturer's contact information always is on the label if more information is needed.
- More is not better, just more dangerous. Use all chemicals sparingly in the home.
- Don't take the hazardous chemical out of the original container and place it in something else, such as an old plastic milk jug or an empty liter soda bottle.

General Safe Chemical Handling, Continued

- Follow safety recommendations when using hazardous substances.
- Properly ventilate the area by turning on the fan and opening the windows. If recommended, wear gloves, long sleeves and masks.
- Don't leave chemical products unattended. If you must leave the room in the middle of a task, either put the product away or take it with you.
- Keep all hazardous chemicals out of the reach of young children or locked up. Properly mark and store under lock and key all household and pool chemicals, paints and poisons.

Chemical Poisoning at Home

- Post the poison control center number near every phone - in the United States it is (800) 222-1222.
- Never store hazardous chemicals near food or food products.
- Keep hazardous chemicals away from items used to prepare and cook foods in, such as pans and silverware.



Chemical Safety at Home

- Never contaminate pots, pans and cooking utensils with a hazardous substance.
- It is dangerous to combine two common household cleaners - chlorine bleach and ammonia. It forms a highly toxic gas, which has caused serious respiratory injury and even some deaths.
- Keep these on a high shelf, out of children's reach.
- Dispose of household and chemical products that are leaking, expired or look bad.

Cleaning up After Working with Chemicals

- After using, immediately wash hands - or any other part of the body that may have come into direct contact with the substance - with warm soapy water.



Summary

- While working from home certainly has its perks, it can also prove to be hazardous if safety isn't a priority.
- Both employers and employees have a responsibility to ensure that a home environment is a safe place to work.
- Even though an employee is working from home an employer should provide safety related assistance and oversight.
- Employees should understand work-related safety policies, procedures and methods of reporting.

Contact Information

Health & Safety Training Specialists

(717) 772-1635

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Topic Title

Questions

