

Directive

FGIS 4790.5

10/18/00

OFFICE SAFETY

1. PURPOSE

This Directive establishes the Federal Grain Inspection Service's (FGIS) policy and procedures for maintaining a safe and healthful work environment in FGIS field offices and Headquarters offices.

2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This Directive replaces FGIS 4790.8 (also known as FGIS 373.1), dated 8/25/94.

3. AUTHORITIES

This Directive is consistent with Public Law 91-596, "Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970;" Executive Order 12196, "Occupational Safety and Health Programs for Federal Employees;" and 29 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1960, "Basic Program Elements for Federal Employee Occupational Safety and Health Programs and Related Matters."

4. POLICY

It is FGIS policy to provide a safe and healthful work environment for all employees. All work performed in FGIS offices and administrative areas will be conducted using safe work practices. Office and administrative areas will be maintained free of recognized hazards.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Division Directors are responsible for ensuring that their subordinate supervisors are provided with copies of this Directive and are complying with it.

- b. Branch Chiefs, Field Office Managers, Suboffice Managers, Area Managers, and Shift Supervisors are responsible for ensuring compliance with this Directive. At each FGIS office location, the supervisor in charge must:
- (1) Ensure that their employees are properly trained and instructed in safe office practices and aware of all hazards associated with their work.
 - (2) Ensure that their employees are trained to identify and avoid hazardous conditions.
 - (3) Ensure that their employees know how to report fires, accidents, or other emergencies, to use fire extinguishers, and know evacuation routes and assembly points. Also, at each field locations, ensure that employees are currently trained in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.
 - (4) Ensure that their employees know where to get medical attention.
 - (5) Annually brief all assigned employees on their responsibilities and rights, as explained in 29 CFR 1960.10. See Attachment 2.
 - (6) Conduct periodic safety briefings for all assigned employees.
 - (7) Conduct routine walk-through inspections of their specific areas of responsibility, identifying and correcting any hazardous conditions. If hazardous conditions are found, make sure that they are corrected in a timely manner, and that all employees are aware of the identified hazard, the plans needed to correct the problem, and when the problem will be corrected. This information should be posted on a Safety Bulletin Board and discussed at office safety meetings.
 - (8) Ensure that emergency equipment (e.g., fire extinguishers and first aid kits) are readily available in case of an emergency.
- c. FGIS employees will:
- (1) Follow FGIS' health and safety policies and procedures, and use proper work procedures.
 - (2) Report work practices/conditions that may be hazardous to their immediate supervisor for investigation and correction.

- (3) Report any on-the-job accidents to their immediate supervisor.
- (4) Actively participate in the FGIS Safety and Occupational Health Program.

6. HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND ABATEMENT

When a hazardous condition is identified in the workplace, immediate action must be taken to correct it. If the hazard cannot be corrected immediately, action must be taken to ensure that all assigned employees know of the hazard and what action they need to take to avoid an accident.

A checklist is an excellent method for identifying and abating hazardous conditions and work practices. Attached is a basic safety and health checklist for office-type work environments. Supervisors are encouraged to modify the checklist to better reflect the local conditions.

- 7. The FGIS Safety and Health Manager shall review this Directive annually.

/s/ David Shipman
Deputy Administrator
Federal Grain Inspection Service

Attachments

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH CHECKLIST

Office Safety

Location: _____ Date: _____ Supervisor: _____

Section I. Environmental

1. Does the office have an objectionable odor?
2. Does the ventilation system deliver quality indoor air?
3. Are work areas properly illuminated? (Average range 30-50 foot candles)
4. Is the heating system adequate? (Average 65-68 degrees F.)
5. Is the air conditioning system sufficient? (Average 75-78 degrees F.)
6. Are noise levels within acceptable levels? (NTE 75 decibels)
7. Is the office free of birds, rodents, insects, and animal harborage places?
8. Are hazardous substances (e.g., cleaning supplies) properly stored?
9. Is smoking only permitted in designated areas outside the office?

Section II. Sanitation

1. Are all work areas, including the floors, walls and ceiling, clean and orderly?
2. Are exhaust duct filters being routinely changed to keep the HVAC unit clean?
3. Are clean toilet facilities provided (standard/ADA approved)?
4. Are toilets free of cracks and properly maintained?
5. Are sufficient numbers of toilets provided for the workers?

6. Is hot and cold water provided for the cleanliness of the employees?
7. Is soap provided for washing?
8. Are disposable paper towels and/or air dryer(s) provided?
9. Are covered containers provided for disposal of waste?
10. Are there walls and doors around each toilet stall to provide privacy?
11. Is the storage and consumption of food/beverages prohibited in toilet area?
12. Is drinking water provided?

Section III. Industrial

1. Are desks/other furniture free of splinters, cracks, and sharp edges?
2. Are chairs in good repair, with no loose casters? Are they properly adjusted to reduce strain and fatigue?
3. Are cabinets and tables strong and balanced to hold the equipment?
4. Are office desks, cabinets and files positioned properly so file drawers will not open into aisles? Can only one drawer be opened at a time?
5. Are all computer keyboards, screens (monitors), and chairs adjustable?
6. Are floors free of defects so as to prevent tripping hazards; e.g., clean, dry, level and in good condition?
7. Are carpets well secured to the floor and free of worn or frayed seams?
8. Are electrical power cords and wires placed properly so as to prevent trips and falls?
9. Are aisles and doorways free from obstructions to permit visibility and movement?
10. Are aisles at least 30" wide and unobstructed?
11. Are stairways in good condition and covered with skid-resistant materials?

12. Is the office equipped with a step stool or ladder so that overhead objects can be reached safely?
13. Are electrical appliances and equipment in good condition and properly grounded?
14. Are a sufficient number of outlets available to eliminate overloading of circuits?
15. Are all computers and office machines grounded (three conductors) with double insulated wires being used?
16. Are all fans (except ceiling fans) equipped with blade guards that have openings that are " or smaller?
17. Are photocopying machines placed in well-ventilated rooms away from the workers' desks? Are these machines serviced routinely?

Section IV. Fire Protection

1. Are emergency exits adequately lighted, open (not blocked), and free of obstructions?
2. Are all exits clearly marked and visible?
3. Are there sufficient exits to permit prompt escape in case of an emergency?
4. Are fire extinguishers properly mounted on walls, charged, and checked regularly?
5. Are appropriate receptacles being used for fire generating material?
6. Are all packing materials (paper, Styrofoam, etc.) kept in a suitable container?
7. Is there an 18" clearance from the ceiling to any stored material?
8. Is there a minimum 36" clearance from sprinkler heads to stored materials?
9. Is the emergency fire plan posted on the bulletin board?
10. Have all employees been briefed on emergency evacuation procedures?
11. Do all employees know how to report a fire, bomb threat, etc.?
12. Are flammable liquids stored in an approved metal locker?

Section V. First Aid

1. Is an approved first-aid kit available and easily accessible in the office?
2. (Field only) Are employees trained in first aid?
3. (Field only) Are employees trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation?
4. Are emergency numbers posted?

Section VI. Work Practices

1. Does the office have an active safety and health program in operation?
2. Is one person (e.g., CDSHO or Branch Chief) clearly responsible for the overall activities of the safety and health program in the office?
3. Does the office have a procedure for handling complaints regarding safety/health?
4. (Field only) Are all employees familiar with basic first aid procedures?
5. (Field only) Is the storage of razor blades and other similar sharp objects only permitted when they are in a protective box?
6. Are approved ladders and stools used to climb rather than using tables and chairs?
7. Do all employees receive training in the operation of office machines; e.g., copiers?
8. Are hazards documented in writing?
9. Do all employees know where fire extinguishers are and how to use them?
10. Do all employees know where fire alarms are?
11. Are all employees familiar with the fire evacuation procedures for their building and what to do in case of fire in their area?
12. Are all employees who work with hazardous substances, such as cleaning fluids, aware of the related hazards?
13. For employees who use computer, are work breaks and variations of tasks incorporated into their work schedules?

Responsibilities and Rights

According to Part 1960, "Basic Program Elements for Federal Employee Occupational Safety and Health Programs and Related Matters," federal employees shall have the following rights and responsibilities:

1960.9--Supervisory Responsibilities

"Employees who exercise supervisory function shall, to the extent of their authority, furnish employees employment and a place of employment which are free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm. They shall also comply with the occupational safety and health standards applicable to their agency and with all rules, regulations, and orders issued by the head of the agency with respect to the agency occupation safety and health program."

1960.10--Employee Responsibilities and Rights

"(a) Each employee shall comply with the standards, rules, regulations, and orders issued by his/her agency in accordance with section 19 of the Act [Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970], Executive Order 12196, and this part [1960] which are applicable to his/her own actions and conduct.

(b) Employees shall use safety equipment, personal protective equipment, and other devices and procedures provided or directed by the agency and necessary for their protection.

(c) Employees shall have the right to report unsafe and unhealthful work condition to appropriate official.

(d) Employees shall be authorized official time to participate in the activities provided for in section 19 of the Act, Executive Order 12196, this part, and the agency occupational safety and health program."

Some Do's and Don'ts of Office Safety

Guard the sharp edges of furniture to prevent personal injury. Keep desk "pull-out" writing surfaces closed when not in use.

Practice good housekeeping. Keep floors free of items that might cause tripping. Keep waste cans out of the way; do not overfill them.

Prevent slipping accidents by cleaning up spills immediately.

Report all defects, such as loose tiles, broken steps, railings and doors, immediately to the building manager/owner or maintenance personnel.

Do not participate in horseplay.

Keep razor blades, tacks, and other sharp objects in closed containers.

Use the proper tool for the job at hand (e.g., a staple remover to remove staples).

Do not overload electrical outlets. Do not plug a multiple outlet strip--an extension cord with multiple electrical receptacles--into a second multiple outlet strip.

Report immediately, any damaged electrical cords, broken switches, loose connections, or bare wires to the building manager/owner or maintenance personnel.

Unplug any office machine that smokes, sparks, or delivers an electrical shock. Have it inspected by the appropriate repair personnel.

FGIS offices are smoke free environments; smoking is prohibited inside all FGIS offices.

Avoid overloading the top drawers of filing cabinets to avoid the possible tipping of the cabinet when the drawers are opened. Open one drawer of the file cabinet at a time to prevent tipping. File cabinets should be placed where their use will not interfere with office traffic patterns.

Keep file and desk drawers closed when not in use to help prevent tripping accidents.

Be sure to use proper lifting techniques. Make arrangements with personnel skilled in moving to shift furniture and other heavy objects.

Do not lean too far back in chairs. This may result in over-balancing and a fall.

Use only safety step stools or ladders for climbing. Don't stand on swivel chairs or use them as step stools.

Be careful with flammable liquids. Only the quantity needed for use should be in the work place. They should be kept and used in a ventilated area, away from excessive heat or ignition sources.

Book cases or file cabinets taller than 64 inches must be secured or anchored. Keep book case doors closed when not in use.

Power switches must be off or the cord unplugged when electrical equipment, such as a computer, is being cleaned or serviced.

Office doors shall be free of obstructions at all times to permit egress in case of an emergency.

Jewelry, long hair, and clothing must be kept clear of the moving parts of all office machines.

If it is necessary to run a cable or electrical cord across the floor, a cable cover must be used to protect the wiring and prevent tripping.

Do not cover air vents or obstruct airflow from registers. Do not place furniture, equipment, or materials in locations that will interfere with air movement around thermostats.

Report any observed pest control problems to the building manager/owner or maintenance personnel. Never attempt to apply any pest control chemical yourself.