

## OFFICE SAFETY

### 1. PURPOSE

This Directive establishes the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) policy and procedures for maintaining a safe and healthy work environment in GIPSA offices.

### 2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This Directive replaces FGIS Directive 4790.5, dated 10/18/00 and is being updated to reflect current organizational changes.

### 3. AUTHORITIES

This Directive is consistent with:

- a. Public Law 91-596, Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970;
- b. Executive Order 12196, Occupational Safety and Health Programs for Federal Employees; and
- c. 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 GIPSA policy to provide a safe and healthy work environment for all employees. All work performed in GIPSA offices and administrative areas must be conducted using safe work practices. Office and administrative areas must be maintained free of recognized hazards.

### 5. RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Division/Regional Directors must ensure that their subordinate supervisors are provided with copies of, and comply with, this Directive.

b. Field Office Managers, Regional Office Managers, Sub Office Managers, Area Managers, and Shift Supervisors must ensure compliance with this Directive. At each office location, the supervisor in charge must:

- (1) Ensure that his/her employees are properly trained and instructed in safe office practices and aware of all hazards associated with their work.
- (2) Ensure that his/her employees are trained to identify and avoid hazardous conditions.
- (3) Ensure that his/her employees know how to report fires, accidents, or other emergencies, to use fire extinguishers, and how to use evacuation routes. And, at field locations, ensure that employees are currently trained in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.
- (4) Ensure that his/her employees know where to get medical attention.
- (5) Brief all assigned employees on their responsibilities and rights annually, as explained in 29 CFR 1960.10. (See Attachment 1).
- (6) Conduct periodic safety briefings for all assigned employees.
- (7) Conduct routine walk-through inspections of his/her specific areas of responsibility, identifying and correcting any hazardous conditions. If hazardous conditions are found, ensure timely correction; inform all employees of the identified hazard, of the plans needed to correct the problem, and of the timeframe for completion of the correction, including when the problem will be corrected; and, post this information on a Safety Bulletin Board and discuss 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. GIPSA Employees must:

- (1) Follow GIPSA safety and health policies and procedures, and use proper work procedures.
- (2) Report to their immediate supervisor work practices/conditions that may be hazardous for investigation and correction.
- (3) Report any on-the-job accidents to their immediate supervisor.

- (4) Actively participate in the GIPSA 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 actions they need to take to avoid an accident.

A checklist is an excellent method for identifying and abating hazardous conditions and work practices. Attachment 2 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.

Attachment 3 is a list of some do's and don'ts of office safety.

## **7. INQUIRIES**

- a. Direct inquiries regarding this Directive to GIPSA, Management and Budget Service, Safety and Occupational Health Manager, at 202-720-0061.
- b. This Directive is available on the Internet at:  
<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/library/gipsa/GIPSA.shtml>

/s/  
Larry Mitchell  
Administrator

3 Attachments

## **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 occupational 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 conditions to the 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."

## 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. Is there sufficient number 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 areas?
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 2 inches 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 inches clearance from the ceiling to any stored material?
8. Is there a minimum 36 inches 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 computers, are work breaks and variations of tasks incorporated into their work schedules?

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

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.

Do not smoke in GIPSA offices; GIPSA offices are smoke-free environments.

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. Place file cabinets where their use will not interfere with office traffic patterns.

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

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. Do not 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. Keep and use them in a ventilated area, away from excessive heat or ignition sources.

Secure or anchor bookcases or file cabinets taller than 64 inches. Keep bookcase doors closed when not in use.

Turn power switches off or unplug the cord when electrical equipment, such as a computer, is being cleaned or serviced.

Keep office doors free of obstructions at all times to permit egress in case of an emergency.

Keep jewelry, long hair, and clothing clear of the moving parts of all office machines.

Cover any cable or electrical cord run across the floor, so as 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.