

# **2010 OFFICE SAFETY PLAN**

**Researched,  
Assembled and Edited By:**

**Granville County Schools  
Sidney B. Moody  
Safety/Regulatory Coordinator  
PO Box 927 / 106 Hicks Mill Road  
Oxford, NC 27565**

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# **Granville County Schools 2010 OFFICE SAFETY PLAN**

## **1. OFFICE SAFETY PLAN**

All work performed in Granville County Schools offices and administrative areas will be conducted using safe work practices. Office and administrative areas will be maintained free of recognized hazards.

## **2. OFFICE ENVIRONMENT**

1. Granville County Schools' office is like any other work environment in that it may present potential health and safety hazards.
2. Most of these, however, may be minimized or eliminated by designing jobs and workplaces properly, and by taking into account differences among tasks and individuals.
3. Inadequate environmental conditions, such as noise, temperature, and humidity, may cause temporary discomforts.
4. Environmental pollutants such as chemical vapors released from new carpeting and furniture may also induce discomforts.

## **3. RESPONSIBILITY**

### **A. Office Supervisor:**

1. The ultimate responsibility for office safety rests with Granville County Schools' office supervisor. All work hazards will be anticipated and appropriate safeguards utilized.
2. Ensures all employees are properly trained and instructed in safe office practices and aware of all hazards associated with their work.

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**B. Employees:**

1. All are to Follow Granville County Schools' health and safety guidelines and instructions of the responsible Office Supervisor and the Safety and Health Manager.

2. Employees bring to the attention of the Office Supervisor and/or Safety and Health Manager potential hazardous situations.

**C. Safety and Health Manager:**

1. Assists Granville County Schools' Office Supervisors in correcting hazardous situations and designating safe working practices.

2. Periodically inspects all office facilities to ensure compliance with existing Granville County Schools' plan.

**4. ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY**

Granville County Schools will ensure all employees work in an environment that is comfortable to work in. With this in mind, the following topics will be addressed and guidelines relating to each will be conducted:

- **NOISE**
- **ELECTRICAL SAFETY**
- **HOUSEKEEPING**
- **WASTE DISPOSAL**
- **VIDEO MONITORS AND COMPUTER TYPING**
- **LIGHTING**
- **INDOOR AIR QUALITY**

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**5. NOISE**

**A. Effects of Noise**

1. Noise can be defined very simply as unwanted sound. Whether a sound is classified as noise or not depends mostly on personal preferences.
2. For noise levels in Granville County Schools' offices, the most common effects are interference with speech communication, annoyance, and distraction from mental activities.
3. Noise in the office can interfere with communications. For example, it may be difficult to talk on the telephone when other people are talking nearby. Speech is likely to interfere with communications especially if the speakers have similar voices.
4. The annoying effect of noise can decrease performance or increase errors in some task situations. If the task requires a great deal of mental concentration, noise can be detrimental to performance. Also, there is some indication that unexpected or unpredictable noise can have more of an effect than continuous or periodic noise.
5. The annoyance caused by noise also depends on the individual. Noise can also be distracting. A sudden noise can interrupt activity temporarily, such as when someone drops a heavy object.

**B. Reducing Noise**

Many unexpected noises cannot be controlled, as when someone accidentally drops something. For many of the annoying sounds in the office environment, the following measures are useful for reducing the level of noise or its effects:

1. If possible, select the quietest equipment. When there is a choice between two or more products, sound levels will be included as a consideration for purchase and use.
2. Granville County Schools will provide proper maintenance of equipment. Lubricate and tighten all loose parts that can cause noise.

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3. Locate loud equipment in areas where its effects are less detrimental. For example, place impact printers away from areas where people will use the phone.

4. Granville County Schools will use barrier walls or dividers to isolate noise sources. Use of buffers or acoustically treated materials can absorb noise that might otherwise travel further. Rubber pads to insulate vibrating equipment can also help to reduce noise.

5. Granville County Schools will enclose equipment, such as printers, with acoustical covers or housings.

6. Granville County Schools will schedule noisy tasks at times when it will have less of an effect on the other tasks in the office.

### **6. ELECTRICAL SAFETY**

Electric cords will be examined on a routine basis for fraying and exposed wiring. Attention will be paid to connections behind furniture, since files and bookcases may be pushed tightly against electric outlets, severely bending the cord at the plug.

#### **Use of Extension Cords:**

1. Extension cords will only be used in situations where fixed wiring is not feasible.

2. Extension cords will be kept in good repair, free from defects in their insulation. They will not be kinked, knotted, abraded, or cut.

3. Extension cords will be placed so they do not present a tripping or slipping hazard.

4. Extension cords will not be placed through doorways having doors that can be closed, and thereby damage the cord. Cords will not be run through or attached to any ceiling grid or tile.

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5. All extension cords will be of the grounding type (three prong conductor) and with an U.L. listing.

**7. HOUSEKEEPING**

1. Good housekeeping is an important element of accident prevention in Granville County Schools' offices.

2. Poor housekeeping may lead to fires, injuries to personnel, or unhealthful working conditions. Mishaps caused by dropping heavy cartons and other related office equipment and supplies could also be a source of serious injuries to personnel.

3. Passageways in Granville County Schools' offices will be free and clear of obstructions. Proper layout, spacing, and arrangement of equipment, furniture, and machinery are essential.

4. All aisles within Granville County Schools' office will be clearly defined and kept free of obstructions.

5. Chairs, files, bookcases and desks will be replaced or repaired if they become damaged. Damaged chairs can be especially hazardous. Filing cabinet drawers will always be kept closed when not in use. Heavy files will be placed in the bottom file drawers.

6. Materials stored within supply rooms will be neatly stacked and readily reached by adequate aisles. Care will be taken to stack materials so they will not topple over.

7. Under no circumstances will materials be stacked within 18 inches of ceiling fire sprinkler heads. Materials will not be stored so that they project into aisles or passageways in a manner that could cause persons to trip or could hinder emergency evacuation.

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**8. WASTE DISPOSAL**

1. Granville County Schools' office personnel will carefully handle and properly dispose of hazardous materials, such as broken glass.
2. A waste receptacle containing broken glass or other hazardous material will be labeled to warn maintenance personnel of the potential hazard.

**9. VIDEO MONITORS AND COMPUTER TYPING**

1. Complaints concerning muscular-skeletal problems are problems often heard from computer Granville County Schools operators.
2. Most common are complaints relating to the neck, shoulders, and back. Others concern the arms and hands and occasionally the legs.
3. Certain common characteristics of computer typing jobs have been identified and associated with increased risk of muscular-skeletal problems. These include:
  - **DESIGN OF THE WORKSTATION.**
  - **NATURE OF THE TASK.**
  - **REPETITIVENESS OF THE JOB.**
  - **DEGREE OF POSTURAL CONSTRAINT.**
  - **WORK PACE ENVIRONMENT.**
  - **WORK/REST SCHEDULES.**
  - **PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES OF INDIVIDUAL WORKERS.**
4. The key to comfort is in maintaining the body in a relaxed, natural position.
5. The ideal work position is to have the arms hanging relaxed from the shoulders.



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**6.** If a keyboard is used, arms will be bent at right angles at the elbow, with the hands held in a straight line with forearms and elbows close to the body.

**7.** The head will be in line with the body and slightly forward.

**A. Display Screen:**

**1.** When work is conducted at a computer, the top of the display screen will be at, or just slightly below, eye level.

**2.** This allows the eyes to view the screen at a comfortable level, without having to tilt the head or move the back muscles.

**3.** Control glare at the source whenever possible; place VDTs so that they are parallel to direct sources of light such as windows and overhead lights, and use window treatments if necessary.

**4.** When glare sources cannot be removed, seek appropriate screen treatments such as glare filters. Keep the screen clean.

**B. Chairs:**

**1.** The chair is usually the most important piece of furniture that affects user comfort in Granville County Schools' office.

**2.** The chair will be adjusted for comfort; making sure the back is supported and that the seat pan is at a height so that the thighs are horizontal and feet are flat on the floor.

**3.** An ergonomically sound chair requires four degrees of freedom - seat pan tilt, backrest angle, seat height, and backrest height.

**4.** Granville County Schools' operators can then vary the chair adjustments according to the task. In general, chairs with the most easily adjustable dimension permit the most flexibility to support people's preferred sitting postures.

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5. Armrests on chairs are recommended for most office work except where they interfere with the task.
6. Resting arms on armrests is a very effective way to reduce arm discomforts.
7. Armrests will be sufficiently short and low to allow workers to get close enough to their work surfaces, especially for tasks that require fixed arm postures above the work surface.

**C. Working height:**

1. The work surface height of Granville County Schools' employees will fit the task.
2. The principle is to place the surface height where the work may be performed in such a manner as to keep arms low and close to the body in relation to the task.
3. If the working height is too high, the shoulders or the upper arms have to be lifted to compensate, which may lead to painful symptoms and cramps at the level of the neck and shoulders.
4. If, on the other hand, the working height is too low, the back will be excessively bowed, which may cause backache.
5. Generally, work will be done at about elbow height, whether sitting or standing.
6. Adjustable workstations will be provided so that individuals may change the stations to meet their needs.
7. A workstation without an adjustable keyboard height and without an adjustable height and distance of the screen is not suitable for continuous work.

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**D. Work/Rest Schedules:**

1. One solution for stress and fatigue is to design the computer operator's work so that tasks requiring concentrated work at the terminal are alternated with non-computer based tasks throughout the workday.
2. Also, a short break (5-10 minutes) will be taken at least once each hour when Granville County Schools' employee is involved in continuous work at the computer.

**E. Additional Measures:**

Additional measures that will aid in reducing discomfort while working with computer typing include:

1. Change position often, standing up or stretching whenever the employee begins to feel tired.
2. Using a soft touch on the keyboard and keeping the shoulders, hands, and fingers relaxed.
3. Using a document holder, positioned at about the same plane and distance as the display screen.
4. Resting the eyes by occasionally looking off into the distance.

**10. LIGHTING**

1. Different tasks require different levels of lighting. Areas in which intricate work is performed, for example, require greater illumination than warehouses.
2. Lighting needs vary from time-to-time and person-to-person as well.
3. One approach is to use adjustable task lighting that can provide needed illumination without increasing general lighting.

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4. Task lamps are very effective to supplement the general office light levels for those who require or prefer additional light.
5. Some task lamps permit several light levels.
6. Since the individual controls task lamps, they can accommodate personal preferences.

**11. INDOOR AIR QUALITY**

Indoor air quality (IAQ) is an increasingly important issue in the work environment. The study of indoor air quality and pollutant levels within office environments is a complex problem. The complexity of studying and measuring the quality of office environments arises from various factors including:

1. Office building floor plans are frequently changing to accommodate increasingly more employees and reorganization.
2. Office buildings frequently undergo building renovations such as installation of new carpet, modular office partitions and free standing offices, and painting.
3. Many of the health symptoms appearing are vague and common both to the office and home environment.
4. In general, very little data on pollutant levels within office environments is available.
5. Guidelines or standards for permissible personal exposure limits to pollutants within office buildings are very limited.
6. Many times, odors are associated with chemical contaminants from inside or outside the office space, or from the building fabric. This is particularly noticeable following building renovation or installation of new carpeting.

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7. Out-gassing from such things as paints, adhesives, sealants, office furniture, carpeting, and vinyl wall coverings is the source of a variety of irritant compounds. In most cases, these chemical contaminants can be measured at levels above ambient (normal background) but far below any existing occupational evaluation criteria.
  
8. Concerns about Indoor Air Quality should be reported to the site Safety Committee, Supervisors, and the Safety & Health Manager.

**12. MISCELLANEOUS SAFE WORK PRACTICES**

1. Guard the sharp edges of furniture to prevent personal injury. Keep desk "pull-out" writing surfaces closed when not in use.
  
2. Granville County Schools will 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 accident by cleaning up spills immediately.
  
3. Report all defects such as loose tiles, broken steps, railings and doors immediately to the Office Supervisor.
  
4. Do not participate in horseplay in Granville County Schools' work place.
  
5. Keep razor blades, tacks, and other sharp objects in closed containers.
  
6. Use the proper tool for the job at hand (e.g. a staple remover to remove staples).

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- 7.** Do not overload electrical outlets. Do not plug a multiple outlet strip-an extension cord with multiple electrical receptacles--into a second multiple outlet strips.
- 8.** Report immediately, any damaged electrical cords, broken switches, loose connections, or bare wires to the Office Supervisor.
- 9.** Unplug any office machine that smokes, sparks, or delivers an electrical shock. Have it inspected by the appropriate repair personnel.
- 10.** Granville County Schools is a tobacco free environment and smoking or any other use is prohibited in or on any Granville County Schools' facilities including vehicles .
- 11.** 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 will be placed where their use will not interfere with office traffic patterns.
- 12.** Keep file and desk drawers closed when not in use to help prevent tripping accidents.
- 13.** Be sure to use proper lifting techniques. Make arrangements with personnel skilled in moving to shift furniture and other heavy objects.
- 14.** Do not lean too far back in chairs. This may result in over-balancing and a fall.
- 15.** Use only safety step stools or ladders for climbing. Don't stand on swivel chairs or use them as step stools.
- 16.** Be careful with flammable liquids. Only the quantity needed for use will be in the work place. They will be kept and used in a ventilated area, away from excessive heat or ignition sources.

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- 17.** Bookcases or file cabinets taller than 64 inches will be secured or anchored. Keep bookcase doors closed when not in use.
- 18.** Power switches will be off, or the cord unplugged, when electrical equipment, such as a typewriter, is being cleaned or serviced.
- 19.** Office doors will be free of obstructions at all times to permit egress in case of an emergency.
- 20.** Jewelry, long hair, and clothing will be kept clear of the moving parts of all office machines.
- 21.** If it is necessary to run a cable or electrical cord across the floor, a cable cover will be used to protect the wiring and prevent tripping.
- 22.** 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.
- 23.** Report any observed pest control problems to Granville County Schools' Office Supervisor and the site Integrated Pest Coordinator. The IPM program is in place to reduce and/or eliminate any exposure to pesticides. Never attempt to apply any pest control chemical yourself.

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**Office Safety Self-Audit Safety Questions**

- YES - NO** Are electrical panels accessible and clearly identified?
- YES - NO** Are electrical equipment such as copiers and computers grounded?
- YES - NO** Are electrical appliances near sinks guarded with a GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter)?
- YES - NO** Are electrical cords in good condition (no broken insulation or missing ground prong on the plugs)?
- YES - NO** Are extension cords in use just for temporary requirements? (They will not be used in lieu of permanent wiring.)
- YES - NO** Is broken, unguarded or otherwise dangerous equipment or furniture promptly removed or disabled so it cannot cause bodily injury?
- YES - NO** Is rolling equipment working correctly and properly stored?
- YES - NO** Are all toilets and washing facilities clean and sanitary?
- YES - NO** Are all worksites and storage areas kept orderly and sanitary?
- YES - NO** Are work surfaces kept dry and/or are appropriate means taken to assure the surfaces are slip-resistant?
- YES - NO** Are spilled materials or liquids cleaned up immediately?
- YES - NO** Are shelves, file cabinets, and furniture more than 5 feet tall adequately secured to prevent tipping or falling?
- YES - NO** Are the tops of shelves, file cabinets, and furniture more than 5 feet tall free of material that could fall and cause injury?
- YES - NO** Is all work areas adequately illuminated?

**GRANVILLE COUNTY SCHOOLS – Location :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reviewer’s Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Conducted:** \_\_\_\_\_

Maintain a copy in the sites permanent safety files and send a copy to the Safety & Health Manager to store in central files.



