

File Cabinet Safety Tips

Excerpt from: <http://www.staples.com/sbd/content/article/e-h/filecabinetsafety.html>

With their bulky metal frames, heavy drawers, and moving parts, file cabinets can be an office safety hazard. If you follow some basic safety tips when using your file cabinets, you can prevent mishaps and injuries caused by this necessary piece of office furniture.

Look first



Before closing a cabinet drawer, take the time to ensure that you're doing it correctly. Always use the handle to close the file drawer and make sure that your fingers are not curled around the edge of the drawer when pushing it shut. Take special care in crowded areas when opening file drawers — never open a drawer if someone is in the path of, or crouched beneath, the drawer. Examine the edges of your cabinets carefully for metal roughness or irregularities and either file the unevenness or reposition the cabinets so they won't cause injury.

Location counts

Make sure that file cabinet drawers do not open into high-traffic corridors in your office. If possible, relocate cabinets to less-traveled areas of your office so protruding drawers are not as much of a peril, and remind cabinet users to close drawers immediately after use.

Load management



Don't stuff all of your files in the top drawer of your file cabinet. Because top-heavy cabinets are at risk of falling over when you open the drawers, disperse the cabinet's contents evenly among all drawers. Remember to open only one drawer at a time as well — many cabinets have a safety lock feature that prevents multiple drawers from being opened simultaneously and guards against tipping. It's a good idea to invest in this safety feature called interlocked drawers.

Low for safety

Think low when storing heavy items. The lowest drawer in the file cabinet is the perfect spot to store weighty materials because they will stabilize the cabinet. Never place anything heavy on top of your file cabinet — if someone were to slam a drawer closed or suddenly open one, the hefty item could fall off the cabinet.

Lighten up

Ensure that there's ample space in the drawers so that users don't have to strain to insert or remove files — this will prevent hand and wrist injuries. And are there items that you could remove completely from your file cabinets? Occasionally purge your files to free up space and improve your ability to find documents with a minimum of manual effort.