

# General/Office Safety Program



California State University, Chico

Department of Environmental Health and Safety  
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## 1.0

## INTRODUCTION

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In accordance with California Labor Code and California Code of Regulations, Title 8, California State University, Chico has developed and implemented a comprehensive Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) to adhere to the requirements set-forth, and to make every effort to maintain a healthy and safe work environment for faculty, staff, students, visiting contractors, and visitors to our campus.

California State University, Chico is committed to providing the safest work environment for faculty, staff, and students. It is the ultimate responsibility of all faculty, staff, and students to see that this information is reviewed and applied to their work area and immediately report any unsafe condition.

This program provides an overview of general safety, as well as office safety, rules and practices, and how these practices can be incorporated in your work environment. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Department of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) at 898-5126.

## **2.0 INJURY AND ILLNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

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### 2.1 Assigned Responsibility

The President of California State University, Chico is ultimately responsible for the safety and health of the employees of the University. In accordance with Title 8, California Code of Regulations, this task has been designated to the Department of Environmental Health and Safety, under the Office of the Vice President for Business and Finance.

### 2.2 Required Elements of an IIPP

- Communication with employees on matters concerning safety and health;
- Identifying, evaluating, and reducing workplace hazards;
- Implementing procedures for injury and illness investigation;
- Correcting hazards in the workplace;
- Training employees;
- Maintaining records.

### 2.3 Location of CSU, Chico's IIPP

The IIPP is located in the Department of Environmental Health and Safety located in Aymer J. Hamilton, Room 130, and can be reviewed at any time. A copy of the IIPP can also be accessed at [www.csuchico.edu/ehs/](http://www.csuchico.edu/ehs/)

## 3.0

## TYPES OF HAZARDS

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The following are examples of typical hazards you may encounter in the workplace:

- **Chemicals** are used in every aspect for a workplace. Chemicals that the trade's worker might use can be different than chemicals an office worker uses. However, if you are not trained on proper usage, storage and safety procedures for chemicals, then you are putting yourself in danger;
- **Electrical cords** can pose a hazard if they are damaged or frayed. This hazard can be reduced by inspecting electrical cords and removing damaged cords at once;
- **Ergonomic issues** can exist at workstations if proper adjusting has not been completed. Items like your chair, keyboard, mouse, monitor, etc. can potentially cause harm if the task is not fitted to the user. Additional information and assistance can be provided by the Department of Environmental Health and Safety at extension 5126 or visit the EH&S web site at [www.csuchico.edu/ehs](http://www.csuchico.edu/ehs);
- **Fire and explosion hazards** can exist at any location with storage of large amount of combustibles, flammable solids or liquids and explosive material;
- **Furniture** and the layout of the furniture can pose a hazard if not properly placed or arranged in your office. Problems that furniture can cause are blocked or difficult means of exit, and tripping hazards;
- **Hand powered tools and equipment** can pose many hazards if not used properly. Always use the correct tool for the task intended. These types of tools can cause pinch hazards, lacerations, punctures, and contusions if not used correctly;
- **Heat-generating sources** can be a fire hazard if they are not properly maintained. Never store combustible or flammable material near heat generating equipment;
- **Housekeeping** is the number one accident prevention action and is everyone's responsibility in the workplace. Keeping the floors clear from tripping hazards, cleaning the break room or lunch area, not overfilling your waste basket, and reporting broken or damage equipment are all components of good housekeeping;
- **Motor vehicle accidents** not only happen on street and highways, but with the large number of vehicle being operated on the campus, it can happen here. This hazard can be reduced by attending the mandatory defensive drive class, constantly being aware of your surroundings, observing the posted or required speed limits (5 mph on campus), and always wearing your seat belt.
- **Office equipment** (copiers, paper cutters, shredders) can pose a real hazard if you are not trained on how to maintain the equipment. Examples of hazards that office equipment can pose are hot surfaces, sharp parts, and pinch points (areas where body parts can become caught);
- **Slips, trips, falls** are one of the leading causes of injuries in the workplace. The probability of them occurring can be reduced by practicing good housekeeping. If you see something on the floor that can cause a person to slip, trip and fall, pick it up. If the hazard on the floor is a substance that you need help with, block off the area to keep people from entering and contact your supervisor;
- **Workplace violence** can take place in any department or office at anytime. This violence can be physical or verbal and can be of different extremes. Refer any perceived violence to your supervisor or the University Police Department at ext. 5555 for additional information.

## 4.0

## DRESS FOR SAFETY SUCCESS

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### 4.1 Safe Office Attire

- Wear loose, comfortable clothing that best fits the job task and working environment unless doing so would increase the potential for injury (i.e. necktie or loose sleeves around rotating parts);
- Whenever possible, avoid open-toed shoes and sandals. This type of footwear is not allowed in laboratories or areas where material handling is conducted;
- Wear comfortable footwear with a good sole to reduce leg and back strain, and to help prevent slips and falls.

### 4.2 Personal Protective Equipment

Personal Protective Equipment is one of the most effective means of protecting yourself from hazards that are directly related to the task being completed.

- **Eye Protection** – protects your eyes from flying particles. Types of eye protection include safety glasses, goggles and personal spectacles with safety rated lenses and side shields. All eye protection must meet the requirements of American National Standards Institute;
- **Face Shields** – complete facial protection from flying particles or chemical splash hazard. All face shields must meet the requirements of American National Standards Institute;
- **Foot Protection** – safety-toe footwear should be worn in any work environment where the feet can be exposed to being crushed by heavy objects. All safety-toe footwear must meet the requirements of American National Standards Institute.
- **Hand Protection** – hand protection comes in many different forms, sizes, materials, and in many cases, intended for a specific type of job. Make sure that when choosing gloves that you select the correct size and type for the job intended. Gloves are designed for use in different environments such as chemical, biological, temperature extremes, metal, wood, etc.;
- **Hard Hats** – head protection is extremely important when working with objects of any size over head or where contact can be made with low hanging objects. All head protection must meet the requirements of American National Standards Institute;
- **Hearing Protection** – the choice of hearing protection depends on a number of factors including level of noise, comfort, and the suitability of the hearing protection for both the worker and the environment. Most importantly, the hearing protection should provide the desired noise reduction. Types of hearing protection include expandable foam plugs, pre-molded, reusable plugs, canal caps, earmuffs and other devices.

## 5.0

## SLIPS, TRIPS, AND FALLS

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### 5.1 Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls

Slips, trips, and falls are the leading injury causing events in any workplace. It is also one of the most avoidable injuries in a workplace. Simple steps, like good housekeeping and being aware of your surroundings, can help reduce your chances of becoming injured by a slip, trip, or fall.

- Level surfaces can cause tripping hazards if you are not aware of your surroundings. Even though the surface is level, other objects such as curbs, planters, speed bumps and other protrusions can still be present;
- Elevated surfaces - standing on chairs, working on a ladder, falling up or down stairs are examples of elevated surfaces that can cause an injury;
- Parking lots with curbs, parking wheel stops, oil patches, and loose gravel or asphalt can all cause tripping and slip hazards in a parking lot;
- Transition surfaces, such as street to curb or smooth surface to rough surface like rocks, gravel and sand;
- Electrical cords, furniture, chairs, boxes and other miscellaneous items can create tripping hazards in aisles;
- Walk with caution on wet surfaces as they may have become increasingly slippery when they are wet with any type of substance;
- Use the handrail when provided to help maintain balance while both ascending and descending stairs. Also use handrails while carrying items in your other hand;
- Report unsafe conditions to your supervisor or EH&S as soon as they are noticed. Don't assume that just because you saw it and did not get hurt, that someone else will have the same luck;
- Hold on to something solid when attempting to sit or while you stand from a sitting position;
- Use approved step stools and ladders in the workplace. If the ladder seems damaged or does not fit the task at hand, don't attempt to do the task until you have located a different ladder. Report all unsafe ladders to your supervisor;
- Wear the most appropriate shoes for your work environment;
- Wipe up spills as soon as they are noticed. If you are required to leave the area to get supplies or call for additional help, attempt to block off the area to prevent others from entering the area;
- Always walk, don't run. Awareness is the key to preventing injuries.

## 6.0

## OFFICE LAYOUT AND LIGHTING

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### 6.1 Office Layout

- Emergency exits and passageways must be kept clear and free of any obstructions at all times;
- Furniture and equipment should be arranged, so:
  - Chairs and equipment are not stored in walkways;
  - File and desk drawers are not left open in the walkways, and;
  - No obstructions are created that block the view around corners or partitions.

### 6.2 Office Lighting

Lighting is one of the most important factors affecting personal comfort on the job. The best lighting system is one in which the lighting level is geared to the task, where brightness ratios are controlled (no intensely bright or dark areas) and where ceiling, wall, and floor surfaces minimize glare. Glare is defined as a harsh, uncomfortable bright light that shines directly in the eyes. Glare may be either direct, coming from lights or sunshine, or indirect, coming from a reflected surface.

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

There are a number of measures that can be used to prevent and control poor lighting conditions in the work environment:

- Regular maintenance of the lighting system should be carried out to clean or replace old bulbs and faulty lamp circuits;
- A light-colored matte finish on walls, ceilings, and floors to reduce glare;
- Whenever possible, office workers should not face windows, unshielded lamps, or other sources of glare;
- Adjustable shades should be used if workers face a window;
- Diffused light will help reduce shadows. Indirect lighting and task lighting are recommended, especially when work spaces are separated by dividers;
- Task lamps are very effective in supplementing general office lighting for those who require or prefer additional lighting. Some task lamps permit several light levels.

## 7.0

## HOUSEKEEPING

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All areas of employment including outside areas should be kept as clean as the nature of the work allows but must be kept free and clear of debris, trash, scrap, spills or other extraneous materials which could create a health hazard or cause an accident. Proper layout, spacing and arrangement of equipment, facilities, and machinery are essential to good housekeeping, allowing orderly operation and avoiding congestion. Some examples of good housekeeping include, but are not limited to:

- Every floor, work area, and passageway should be kept clear of obstructions that protrude into the walkway or have the potential to result in unsure footing, such as loose parts, boxes, packing material, or tools;
- Keep stairwells clear at all times. Do not store boxes, files, or other debris in the stairwells or landings;
- Pick up dropped pencils, paper clips, and rubber bands that can cause you or a co-worker to slip;
- Contact Facilities Management and Services (FMS) if you see common areas that are cluttered with rubbish;
- Wipe up spills immediately. If a spill is too large to clean up quickly, contact your supervisor;
- Report uneven, defective flooring, worn spots in carpets, chipped tiles, and worn stair treads to FMS;
- In areas where wet or damp conditions are likely to routinely exist, appropriate drainage should be maintained. Grating, mats, raised platforms, or anti-slip strips should be evaluated and considered for control or prevention of slippery conditions;
- Avoid overfilling wastebaskets and dumpsters;
- Avoid dust accumulations;
- Maintain clean and organized conditions of office equipment, storage, and work areas.

## 8.0

## WORKSTATION SET-UP

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### 8.1 Ergonomics

Ergonomics is defined as fitting the workstation or task to the worker by modifying or redesigning the job, workstation, tool or environment. Workstation design can have a big impact on employee's health and well-being. There are a multitude of discomforts which can result from ergonomically incorrect computer workstation setups. The most common complaints relate to the neck, shoulders, and back. Others concern the arms and hands and occasionally the eyes. For example, poor chairs and/or bad postures can cause lower back strain; or a chair that is too high can cause circulation loss in legs and feet.

Certain common characteristics of Video Display Terminals (VDT) have been identified and associated with increased risk of musculoskeletal problems. VDT considerations should include:

- Design of the workstation;
- Nature of the task;
- Repetitiveness of the job;
- Degree of postural constraint;
- Work pace;
- Work/rest schedules;
- Personal attributes of individual workers.

The key to comfort is in maintaining the body in a relaxed, neutral position. The ideal work position is to have the arms hanging relaxed from the shoulders. If a keyboard is used, arms should be bent at right angles at the elbow, with the hands held in a straight line with forearms and elbows close to the body. The head should be in lined with the body and slightly forward.

### 8.2 Additional Information

- For additional information on Ergonomics, refer to the CSU, Chico IIPP.

## 9.0

## MATERIAL HANDLING

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### 9.1 Back Injury Prevention

Proper lifting techniques are critical to back safety, but perhaps more important is proper planning. Before you lift that box, or tool, or piece of equipment, take a moment to consider your action:

- Do you need to lift the item manually?
- How heavy is it?
- Where are you moving the item from?
- Where are you moving it to?
- What route do you have to follow?

Many times the item you are moving could be moved with a piece of equipment - a dolly, a hand truck, or a forklift. Consider using mechanical help wherever possible. If the item needs to be moved manually, and it is heavy and/or awkward, ask for help. When using mechanical help, remember to push, do not pull. When moving an item from a hard-to-reach place, be sure to position yourself as close to the load as possible. Slide it out to get it closer, and be sure that you have adequate room for your hands and arms. Be aware of adjacent obstructions, on either side, above and below the load. Think about where the item will be placed once you've lifted it – remember plan ahead.

Try to allow yourself as much room as possible to set the load down. You can always shift it a little later. Check your path from start to finish - remove tripping hazards, protect openings, and get help if you need to get heavy materials up a ladder. Make sure that the lighting is sufficient to see where you are going. Stabilize uneven or loose ground, or choose an alternate route. The shortest route isn't always the fastest, or the safest.

Most back injuries are avoidable if employees make the correct lifting choices. Moderation and balance are important considerations in care and maintenance of your back. By correcting proportions of strength, flexibility, and overall quality of life you can eliminate or minimize back injuries. You need to exercise, eat right, and stretch as often as possible to help prevent injuries, and to recover more quickly if you do get injured.

Remember that most back injuries can be attributed to one of these five causes:

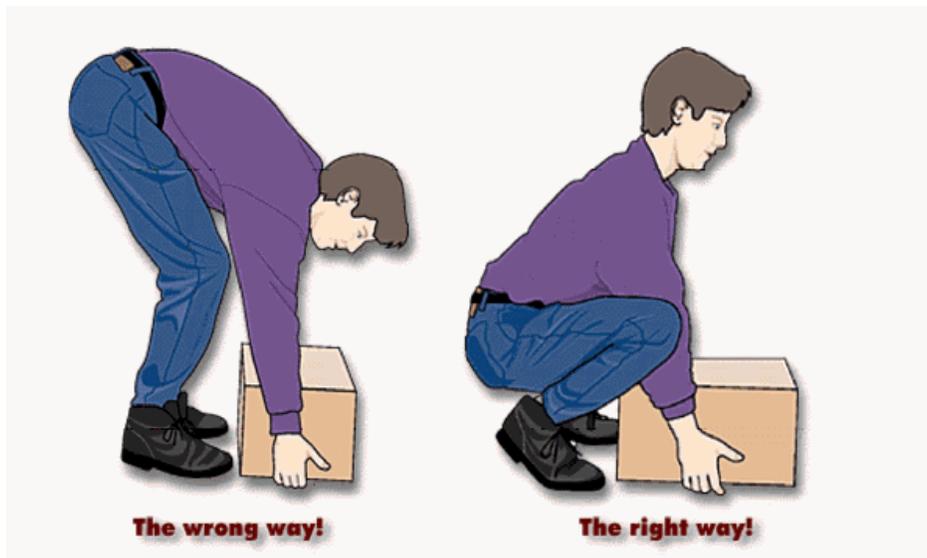
- Posture;
- Body mechanics/work habits;
- Stressful living;
- Loss of flexibility;
- Poor conditioning.

### 9.2 Use Proper Lifting Techniques

Also consider that not all back injuries are a result of sudden trauma - most are cumulative in nature, where a repeated minor injury has flared up, or continued use of a heavy tool in the same position has caused pain, or a great deal of time is spent in the same position.

Familiarize yourself with, and practice these techniques when lifting items on the job and at home:

- Plan your lift;
- Stand with your feet apart, alongside the object to be lifted;
- Squat down, getting as close to the load as possible;
- Get a good grip on the object;
- Lift with your legs, not your back;
- Keep the object close to your body;
- Center the weight over your feet;
- Avoid twisting.



## 10.0

## OFFICE EQUIPMENT SAFEGUARDING

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### 10.1 Electronic Office Equipment Hazards

- **Unsafe/Non-Approved Equipment**

All poorly maintained or unsafe, poor quality, non-rated (Underwriters Laboratory) coffee makers, radios, lamps, space heaters, etc. (often brought in or provided by employees) can not be used on campus. Such appliances can develop electrical shorts creating fire and/or shock hazards. Equipment and cords should be inspected regularly, and a qualified individual should make repairs.

- **Live Parts Unguarded**

Wall receptacles should be designed and installed so that no current-carrying parts will be exposed. All receptacle cover plates should be kept tight to eliminate the possibility of shock. All broken and/or cracked cover plates, as well as any unsafe electrical conditions should be reported to Facilities Management and Services immediately.

- **Working on “Live Equipment”**

Disconnect electrical equipment before cleaning, adjusting, or applying flammable solutions. If a guard is removed to clean or repair parts, replace it before testing the equipment and returning the equipment to service.

- **Blocking Electrical Panel Doors**

If an electrical malfunction should occur, the panel door, and anything else in front of the door will become very hot. Electrical panel doors should always be kept closed, to prevent “electrical flashover” in the event of an electrical malfunction and nothing can be stored within 30" of the panels.

- **Recommendations**

Based on these hazards it is important that all staff understand how to properly operate electronic office equipment. Reading and following operation instructions is essential, but so is communicating restrictions. In particular, all staff must understand the appropriate response when a piece of equipment malfunctions. For instance, a paper jams in a photocopier. Reaching into a copier to retrieve a piece of jammed paper can result in burns or even electrocution. Certain materials such as plastic transparency sheets should not be used in some copiers. At the end of the day, be sure to power down all electrical equipment.

The names/phone numbers of repair or service providers (if maintained by persons other than CSUC Staff) should be posted prominently near the copier, fax or other equipment. When in doubt, contact the vendor or repair professional for assistance.

## 11.0

## ELECTRICAL SAFETY

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### 11.1 Necessity for Electricity

Electricity is essential to the operations of a modern automated office as a source of power. Electrical equipment used in an office is potentially hazardous and can cause serious shock and burn injuries if improperly used or maintained.

#### Nature of the Hazard:

- Electricity travels through electrical conductors, which may be in the form of wires or parts of the human body;
- Most metals and moist skin offer very little resistance to the flow of electrical current and can easily conduct electricity;
- Other substances such as dry wood, porcelain, or pottery offer a high resistance and can be used to prevent the flow of electrical current;
- If a part of the body comes in contact with the electrical circuit, a shock will occur;
- The electrical current will enter the body at one point and leave at another. The passage of electricity through the body can cause great pain, burns, destruction of tissue, nerves, and muscles and even death;
- Factors influencing the effects of electrical shock include the type of current, voltage, resistance, amperage, pathway through body, and the duration of contact. The longer the current flows through the body, the more serious the injury;
- Injuries are less severe when the current does not pass through or near nerve centers and vital organs;
- Electrical accidents usually occur as a result of faulty or defective equipment, unsafe installation, or misuse of equipment on the part of office workers.

### 11.2 Using Electricity Safely

- Turn off all electrical equipment when not in use;
- Cords must be properly equipped with grounding prongs;
- Electrical cords should be visually inspected on a periodic basis to identify frayed and worn cords;
- Keep all electrical cords out of walkways and passageways;
- Extension cords are not permitted on campus for continuous use;
- Use only “power strips” with circuit protection or over current protection. Surge suppressors do not prevent circuit overload which is a fire hazard;
- Never “daisy chain” power strips (plugged into each other);
- Don’t overload power strips. Most are rated at 15 amps maximum;
- Combustible material, such as paper, should not be stored on or in close proximity to electrical outlets and connections;
- Nothing should be stored within 30" of electrical panels.

## 12.0 HEAT GENERATING APPLIANCES & EQUIPMENT

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Heat generating equipment, like electrical equipment, can be very safe if used and maintained correctly. However, improper care, storage, or placement of any type of equipment that generates heat can cause a fire, bodily injury, or even death.

### 12.1 Types of Heat Generating Appliances and Equipment

- Coffee makers
- Hot Pots/Tea Kettles
- Portable fans
- Microwave ovens
- Mug warmer
- Portable refrigerators
- Toasters and toaster ovens

### 12.2 Safe Practices for Heat Generating Equipment

- Nothing can be stored within 30" of electrical panels;
- Use only Underwriters Laboratory (UL) listed equipment;
- Insure that grounding prongs are intact;
- Plug into outlet directly;
- Turn-off all items when not in use;
- Do not leave equipment unattended.

The following heat generating appliances have restrictions on their use:

#### Portable Heaters:

Portable heater use is prohibited by Executive Order # 987, which states in part that portable electric heaters *and* fans are not to be used unless specifically required by an occupant's medical condition or the failure of a building's heating or air conditioning systems.

#### Toaster and Toaster Ovens:

Toasters are required to be unplugged whenever not in use – this is stated in manufacturer safety instructions. Toasters and toaster ovens use considerable amounts of electricity, have a high amperage, and produce radiant heat that can ignite combustible items if in close proximity to the appliance. Care must be taken with their use.

Generally speaking, portable appliance use in office spaces is restricted. The use of toasters and toaster ovens (even in designated break areas) is discouraged due to fire safety concerns.

If you have a medical need for appliances such as refrigerators or need a portable heater in your office, please contact your supervisor and/or Facilities Management Services. You may be required to submit a physician's notice of medical need.

## 13.0

## CHEMICAL SAFETY

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### 13.1 Hazard Communication

The purpose of the Hazard Communication Standard is to ensure that the hazards of all chemicals produced or imported are evaluated, and that information concerning their hazards is understood by the employees. This is communicated by hazard communication programs including labeling and other forms of warning, Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS's) and employee training.

- Every employee working with or around hazardous materials has the *right* and the *responsibility* to be aware of the hazards in their workplace.
- Every employee working with or around hazardous materials has the *right* and the *responsibility* to use proper safety procedures when working with hazardous materials used or produced in their workplace.

### 13.2 Safe Work Practices

- Employees should always follow the written procedures provided by the manufacturer;
- Containers must be properly labeled;
- Employers are required to provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and employees are required to use the appropriate PPE;
- Chemicals/materials should be used as directed by manufacturer's and supervisor's directions;
- Storage of all hazardous materials must comply with the regulations specified for material categories;
- Review the MSDS prior to use;
- Those who work with potentially hazardous chemicals or substances are required to participate in Hazard Communication training annually and receive job specific training from their supervisor. Contact your supervisor or EH&S for additional information.

Contact the Department of Environmental Health and Safety at ext. 5126 for disposal of hazardous materials.

## 14.0

## REPORTING INJURIES

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### 14.1 Employee injuries

- Employee: It is the employee's responsibility to report an injury to your supervisor immediately. Any delay in reporting an injury may cause delay in workers' compensation benefits.
- Supervisor: It is the supervisor's responsibility to report the injury/illness to Disability Program Office (DPO) at extension 5436. Within eight (8) hours of the injury/illness, the direct supervisor must complete all sections of the OSHA 301 Form. Forward the original copies of these forms to the Disability Program Office at campus Zip 022.

### 14.2 Student, Visitor, Contractor

- Any person who becomes aware of an unsafe condition that results in an injury to a student, visitor, or contractor should contact EH&S at extension 5126 or University Police at extension 5555 or 911 in an emergency.