

# Simple Solutions for Office Hazards

By Sandy Smith

Office work spaces often have overlooked hazards that threaten the physical well-being of all who enter. Company co-workers or, if work is done from a home office, family members and pets, unknowingly can be in harm's way. While some threats are fairly obvious, others can lurk in the most unexpected places.

In the office, equipment cables and wires can become a trip-and-fall hazard – and an expensive workers' compensation case. Poised and ready to trip all who pass, office cables and wires are far more than an unsightly nuisance. Slips, trips and falls constitute the majority of general industry accidents. In the United States, they cause 15 percent of all work-related deaths and are second only to motor vehicles as a cause of fatalities, according to OSHA.

In a home office environment, small children and common household animals like cats, dogs, rabbits and ferrets often see equipment wires as play things – all too often as chew toys. Clearly such a circumstance puts the child or pet at great risk, with electric shock and strangulation at the top of the list.

The experts at <http://CableOrganizer.com> offer these simple office safety solutions:

**Cable Control on the Cheap:** For just a few dollars, computer cables can be easily shielded with a split wire loom, a flexible and durable polyethylene corrugated tube with a split down the side where you enter your multi-cable bundle. If you have to add another wire later on, you can easily slip it into the split wire loom along with the others without removing the entire bundle.

**Achieve Lift-Off:** Cables, power adapters, power strips, hubs, modems and other small devices can be readily lifted off the floor and put safely out of harm's way with cable management products that loop, tie and hang “cable clutter” off the floor to reduce work space risks including snags, trips and liquid spills.

**Wire Fire Can Be Dire:** With a glut of equipment, wiring and electrical outlets conducting heat, often over long periods of time and in compact spaces, fire safety is an important workspace consideration. In addition to the standard fire extinguisher, other fire safety measures also should be employed. Flame spread is one vital safety consideration that easily can be addressed. Flame-retardant wire sleeving that does not support combustion can significantly reduce office fire hazards. You also can establish an effective insulating barrier to prevent the spread of fire and smoke through structural gaps and voids with fire-rated expanding polyurethane foams – a cost-effective way to establish an insulating seal on concrete, brick, wood, metal, aluminum and steel.

**An Important Mat-ter:** Use traction floor mats in high-traffic and extended-use areas, particularly those prone to moisture or spills. Be sure to use a floor mat with beveled edges to eliminate trip risk. Mats with sponge bases will enhance ergonomic safety for employees who must stand for longer periods of time.

**Surface Raceways:** Home office wires that run across the floor to a distant outlet are among the most dangerous office situations, with a high risk of injuries or damaged equipment. Fortunately, surface raceways are a readily available and easy way to organize and protect electrical cords that run along the floor or on the wall. These “cable channels” are made of tough PVC and can be painted to match office décor.

**Cord Protectors:** These wire cover systems are another great way to keep from tripping on loose cables and cords running across a walkway or behind your desk. Cord protectors cover, hide and protect cords and cables while keeping floors clear and safe. They also lie flat, and stay flat, and are easy to install.

**Heavy Metal:** Whether you want greater protection for your wires from children, animals, rodents or pests, or have a need to protect outdoor fiber optics, RG-6 coaxial cable or Category 5E cables from wildlife or the elements, metal braided sleeving, made from tin-coated copper, is both flexible and strong, and also offers electromagnetic interference (EMI) protection.

**Take the Edge Off:** Wrap anything with a sharp edge such as broken/cracked glass, brittle plastic casings or other materials that may break and produce a sharp or rough edge in corrugated cardboard and secure with a heavy-duty duct tape to protect yourself and others from accidental lacerations. This is especially important before placing such items in a trash container.