ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

Year 8 - number 312 Wednesday 20 november 2024

Guide to safety training for office workers

Everything you need to know about safety training for office personnel: regulations, training requirements, and solutions for a safe and compliant work environment

Workplace safety is not just a priority for high-risk sectors but also for environments like offices, where risks may seem less evident. In the office, workers are exposed to risks related to incorrect postures, work-related stress, and continuous use of IT equipment. Italian legislation, with **Legislative Decree 81/2008**, sets specific **training requirements for every worker, including office employees**.

Training requirements for the office sector

Article 2 of Legislative Decree 81/2008 defines "workers" as all people who carry out an activity within an employer's organization, even without remuneration or for apprenticeship purposes. According to Article 37 of the same decree, employers must ensure **sufficient and adequate training in health and safety matters** for all workers, including office employees, who fall into the "**low risk**" category.

Training structure

Mandatory safety training for low-risk categories working in office activities is divided into two modules.

1. **General Training** (4 hours): common to all sectors, introduces general concepts of risk and prevention. Main topics include:

- Risk, damage, prevention, and protection concepts
- Company safety organization
- Rights and duties of company subjects regarding safety
- The institutional system and supervisory and control bodies

2. **Specific Training** (4 hours for low risk): dedicated to risks specific to the office environment. This module covers various topics:

- Workstation ergonomics
- Risks related to display screens and electronic devices
- Work-related stress risk
- Emergency evacuation and management procedures

This training is essential for recognizing and managing office environment risks while ensuring compliance with regulations and worker safety.

Training timeline and methods

The regulations establish that safety training must be completed:

- at the start of employment;
- in case of transfer or change of duties;
- with the introduction of new equipment or hazardous substances.

For new hires, training should ideally take place before starting work activities or, if not possible, be completed **within 60 days of hiring**.

Delivery methods: classroom and online training

Both the General Training module and the Low-Risk Specific Training module can be conducted either in the classroom or through eLearning. The latter allows workers to follow the course remotely, thus adapting to work and smart working needs.

Specific risks for the office sector and how to prevent them

Although offices are considered low-risk environments, they present criticalities for workers that training aims to prevent. Among the most common risks are:

- **Musculoskeletal problems:** often caused by incorrect postures at the desk and prolonged use of electronic devices.
- **Visual fatigue:** continuous exposure to screens can cause eye strain and concentration difficulties.
- **Work-related stress:** office work can generate stress due to workloads, pressures, and potential interpersonal conflicts.
- **Physical risks:** although less frequent, physical risks still exist in the office, such as fire hazards and electrical risks.

Training updates: why they're essential

The 2011 State-Regions Agreement establishes the obligation for **safety training updates every 5 years**. This 6-hour update ensures workers stay current with regulatory changes and new prevention measures. Topics covered include:

- **Legal-regulatory aspects**: updates on current laws and regulations.
- **Emerging risks and new technologies**: to prepare workers to face potential risks related to new work methods, such as smart working.
- **Company safety organization**: insights into the most recent and effective safety practices.

This update can also be delivered via eLearning for low-risk activities, thus ensuring training continuity and accessibility.

Benefits of safety training for the office sector

Investing in safety training for office workers brings several tangible benefits at both company and personal levels.

- **Reduction in accidents and sick leave** thanks to a safe and organized environment.
- **Improved productivity** derived from ergonomic workstations and workers' awareness of their risks.
- **Regulatory compliance**: fulfilling training obligations avoids penalties and strengthens the company reputation.
- **Increased awareness**: informed personnel are more attentive and responsible, actively contributing to accident prevention.

ELearning solutions for office worker training

Mega Italia Media offers eLearning courses specifically designed for the office sector, in line with regulatory requirements and easily accessible for workers. Available courses include:

- **General Training (4 hours)**: mandatory course for all workers, covering basic concepts of workplace health and safety.
- **Specific Training for Low-Risk Workers ? Offices (4 hours)**: targeted course for office sector workers, exploring risks related to the office environment.
- **Office workers five-year-update course (6 hours)**: mandatory update course every 5 years, covering new developments and prevention practices in health and safety.

These courses, accessible on the Mega Italia Media website, are a modern and practical solution for companies wishing to fulfill training obligations with flexibility while ensuring a safe and compliant work environment.