

# The Gowrie Safety Report

Safety & Loss Prevention Insights



## Ten Tips from Gowrie Group's Safety & Loss Prevention Expert

As your trusted insurance advisor, Gowrie Group strives to offer you timely, pertinent information on how to best protect your business from loss. Our safety team focuses on helping clients decrease their liabilities and exposures to fines, lawsuits, negative press, and employee complaints. Our Top-10 series offer practical, smart advice to help you build a safer workplace and improve your OSHA standards. We are happy to provide you more detail on any topic covered in our lists.

### Ten Gowrie Group Safety & Loss Prevention Tips:

**#1 Fire Extinguishers.** Fire extinguishers must be easily accessible, with a clearance of 18" on both sides and 36" in front of the extinguisher. OSHA can fine up to \$7,000 for a blocked extinguisher. *For more see [OSHA #1910.175](#)*

**#2 Respirators.** If you have been issued a respirator, remember that it should be kept in a sealed container when it is not in use. You must thoroughly clean your respirator after each use. Do not share your respirator with anyone. *For more see [OSHA #1910.134](#)*

**#3 Extension Cords.** Extension cords are for temporary use, which means that they should be unplugged and put away at the end of every shift. They should never be run through doorways, taped to walls, or run behind desks. *For more see [OSHA #1910.334](#)*

**#4 Combustible Dust.** The OSHA Combustible Dust National Emphasis Program means that you have a greater likelihood of being inspected for dust compliance. A simple way to measure dust accumulation; place an office paperclip on top of an surface – electrical outlets, panels, fixtures – to check that the dust does not cover the paperclip, if it does you are in violation. Make sure that your facility is clean and dust-free. *For more see [OSHA #Combustible Dust, an Explosion Hazard](#).*

**#5 Stretching.** Stretching during the workday is essential to both productivity and wellness, even when workstations are correct and ergonomically optimized. High repetition tasks or jobs that require long periods of static posture may require several, short rest breaks (micro breaks or rest pauses). During these breaks users should be encouraged to stand, stretch, and move around. This provides rest and allows the muscles enough time to recover. *For more see [OSHA's recommendations for Ergonomic Computer Workstations](#).*

**#6 Flammable Products.** Never put flammable products (solvents, some cleaners, gasoline, etc.) into spray bottles. The fumes and vapors from these types of products cannot be seen, but they are extremely flammable. When they are atomized, the possibility of explosion greatly increases. *For more see [OSHA #1910.106](#)*

**#7 Owner's Manual.** Always read the Owner's Manual before using a new piece of equipment. The manual not only provides directions on use, but also provides safety tips and maintenance recommendations.

**#8 Filing Cabinets.** Remember to open only one drawer of a filing cabinet at a time. When two drawers are open, the cabinet is likely to tip over. An open drawer must be attended to at all times. When you are finished, remember to close the drawer completely.

**#9 Personal Protective Equipment.** It is necessary to wear safety glass when operating machinery and tools, working with hazardous materials, or doing any activity where there may be danger to your eye. A simple pair of glasses has been proven to protect your eyesight in these settings. Goggles, the next step up, offer slightly more protection from splashes, dust, or flying chips. *For more see [OSHA #1910.133](#)*

**#110 Unplugging Electrical Devices.** When unplugging tools, lighting, office equipment, or any other electrical devices, remember to use the plug rather than tug on the cord. The action of tugging on the cord can cause damage to the wires, resulting in fire or malfunction of the equipment. *For more see [OSHA #1910.334](#)*



**Gowrie's Safety & Loss Prevention insights are created by Kellie Crete.** Kellie manages Gowrie Group's Safety & Loss Prevention practice area and has more than 25 years of experience in safety and loss control, and specializes in advising the marine industry and other niche segments of the commercial marketplace. Kellie is an OSHA authorized instructor. [kelliec@gowrie.com](mailto:kelliec@gowrie.com), 508.509.3788, [www.gowrie.com/safety](http://www.gowrie.com/safety)

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