

HALLOWEEN SPOOKTACULAR SAFETY & LOSS PREVENTION

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OUTLOOK

OFFICE
OF

1000

HAZARDS

THE MOST SHOCKING LIST OF
DANGERS EVER ASSEMBLED!





CARELESSNESS

The consequences can be deadly.

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A Message from the Editor

Staying mindful of our surroundings and our actions in them is what keeps us safe, at work and everywhere else. Too often, especially this time of year, we get busy, distracted, and engrossed in our tasks, and it can be tempting to take shortcuts in safety — that is, if we think about safety at all.

Standing on a chair to reach something on a high shelf (or to hang holiday decorations — we see more claims involving employees who fall off of furniture in December than in any other month) instead of using a step stool ... looking at our phones instead of where we are going ... thinking we “don’t have time” to clean up that water spilled on the floor ... we’ve done it before, and it turned out fine. But what if this time it doesn’t? What might be gained by cutting corners is miniscule compared to what might be lost when it causes an accident.

In Risk Management, we categorize accidents by a long list of causes. But most workplace accidents can be boiled down to one essential cause — carelessness.

It’s not necessarily the same thing as being reckless (though reckless behavior certainly isn’t careful); it simply means not giving time, attention, and effort to caring about safety. How many accidents are caused by a moment of carelessness? And how many could have been avoided with a moment of care?

The information in this issue isn’t new. We all know the difference between safe and unsafe behavior. But even those of us who see the consequences of workers’ unsafe actions every day can use some motivation to stay focused on safety.

Enjoy this **spook-tacular** edition of OUTLOOK, and have a safe and happy fall!

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SLIPPERY FLOORS! SHARP OBJECTS!
UNRULY OFFICE CHAIRS! FALLING FILE CABINETS!
TANGLED POWER CORDS! DANGEROUS DAISY CHAINS!
COLLAPSING FURNITURE! SCALDING HOT COFFEE!



**Picture a dangerous workplace ...
where hazards lurk around every corner.**

Is it a warehouse stacked high with boxes and crawling with forklifts?
A laboratory lined with glass vials of dangerous chemicals?
A construction site crisscrossed with scaffolding and heavy equipment?

Guess again.

Every day, accidents occur in cubicles and offices, hallways and stairwells, breakrooms and bathrooms ... nowhere is safe.

**And one false move can cost you your livelihood ...
or your **LIFE**.**



THE OFFICE

FILE CABINETS, SHELVES, & DESKS

The most common injuries from file cabinets and desks occur when a drawer has been left open and someone bumps into it or trips and falls over it. Always close drawers immediately after use.

Be careful to keep fingers and other body parts clear when closing drawers. Lubricate sticky drawers to avoid a strain or “kickback” injury.

Never overload a shelf or other furniture beyond its weight capacity. Store heavier items at the bottom, lighter items on the top of drawers and shelves. Top-heavy furniture can tip over. Do not place boxes or other heavy items on top of tall bookcases or cabinets where they can fall and hurt someone.

Always attach furniture such as shelves and hutches securely to the wall to avoid toppling. Never stack file cabinets on top of one another.

Do not overstuff file cabinet drawers, as this can create a strain hazard (having to pull or push too hard to retrieve or return files can cause muscle injuries).



FLOORS, WALKWAYS, & STAIRS

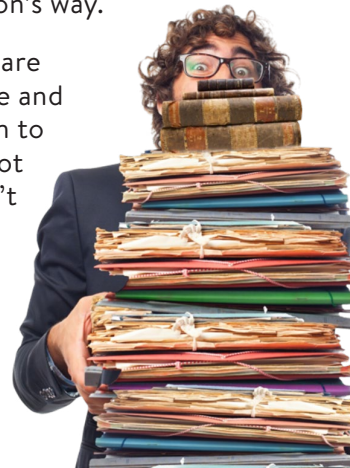
Floors can be slippery, especially when wet. Instruct maintenance to place caution signs when they clean or wax hard floors. These signs should also be available to all employees to use when there is a spill of any kind, whether on hard floors or carpets. Spills should be reported and/or cleaned up immediately. Take extra care on rainy days to wipe your feet; use a plastic bag to keep water from dripping off wet umbrellas onto the floor.

Stairs should be equipped with non-skid strips for added grip. Use the handrails and place your feet carefully. Be sure to lift your feet high enough to clear each step when ascending.

Avoid using throw rugs, as these constitute a tripping hazard. Keep areas of egress (doorways & walkways) free of boxes, bins, or other items that may block a person's way.

No matter where you are walking, walk with care and purpose. Pay attention to where you're going (not your phone!), and don't rush, which can cause a collision.

Never carry a load that blocks your view, especially on stairs.



The National Safety Council suggests installing convex mirrors on the walls of busy hallway intersections to help people see what's around the corner.

Slippery floors are the primary cause of workers' compensation claims and the leading cause of lost work days in the U.S.

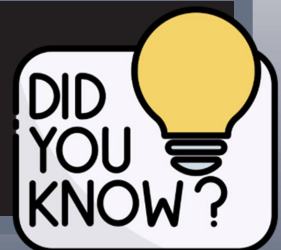
DOORS

Open doors carefully — you never know who may be on the other side!



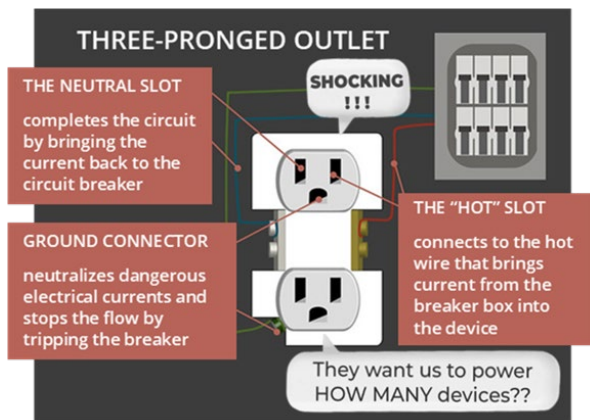
Take care to keep hands and fingers (yours and others') clear when closing doors (this goes for cabinet doors as well). Doors or jambs with sharp edges should be reported to maintenance and fixed immediately.

Report doors that stick or have broken mechanisms to maintenance immediately — many injuries are caused by doors that open or close unexpectedly, or take too much effort to open.



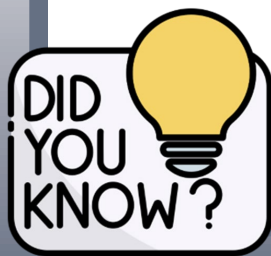
OUTLETS & PLUGS

Outlets should be grounded (for use with three-pronged plugs). Never use a device with bent or loose prongs, frayed cords, or exposed wires, or one in which the ground prong has been removed.



Be careful that the total wattage of the devices plugged into the outlet does not exceed the outlet's capacity, which often occurs when using a multi-plug or power strip. Too many devices in a single outlet can pull too much electrical current, which can ruin your electronics, or worse, cause a fire.

The National Fire Protection Association estimates around 3,340 fires occur in offices each year, the vast majority of which happen in business offices.



Office fires are particularly dangerous, as most office equipment gives off toxic fumes when it burns.

Most office fires occur Monday through Friday between the hours of noon and 2:00 pm.



POWER STRIPS



Power strips and surge protectors are designed to shield your electronics from a power surge and reduce the risk of fire, but only if used properly. You may not realize that power strips are made to last between 3-5 years, depending on how well they are made and maintained. Choose one with an internal circuit breaker, keep it free from dust and debris, and don't overload it — most can power four or five individual items safely.

Keep your power strip uncovered so that air can circulate freely. If it feels hot, it may need to be replaced.

NEVER plug a power strip into another power strip, as this will cause the outlet to pull too much power, creating a fire hazard.

EXTENSION CORDS & WIRES

Extension cords can be a good way to temporarily bring power to a location far from an outlet. However, OSHA considers any extension cord used for more than 90 days to be "permanent wiring" (and a fire hazard) — if a device is needed for longer than 90 days, consider moving it or having an outlet installed.

Do not run extension cords under rugs or carpets — in addition to being a trip hazard, they can overheat or become unknowingly damaged.

Do not chain extension cords together, and NEVER plug a power strip into an extension cord — the electrical resistance increases with the added cord length, which generates heat, risking equipment failure or fire.

Cords or wires of any kind should not stretch across rooms or walkways where people can trip over them — place them up against walls or otherwise out of the way. If a cord must go across an area where people walk, use a commercial cord cover, preferably one in a contrasting color to alert people of the hazard. They can even pose a trip hazard



when placed under a desk — tie them back, or better yet, use a cord management device to keep them neat and out of the way.

HOUSEKEEPING & GERMS

Given that more than two-thirds of employees eat at their desks, it's easy to see how surfaces and devices can get messy. If you must eat at your desk, clean up your workspace when you finish, including devices (clean those crumbs out of your keyboard!) and furniture. Wash dishes using hot, soapy water.

Food or not, offices get dirty. Implement a cleaning schedule — wipe down your desk, phone, keyboard, mouse, chair, and any other frequently touched surfaces with an antibacterial wipe once a week. Give your workspace a thorough cleaning using an antibacterial spray at least once a month.

Clutter not only brings chaos to the workspace, it also makes it more difficult to clean effectively. Keep work surfaces neat and tidy. Do not leave open scissors, box cutters, razor blades, or other sharp objects lying around or loose in a drawer — cover them and use trays to arrange and store them properly. Pick up any loose staples, thumbtacks, and other objects that may fall on the floor and injure someone.

HEAVY & BULKY OBJECTS

Use proper lifting techniques when picking up boxes or other items off the floor.

Don't try to move or carry more than you can handle — whether it be too heavy, too bulky, or too unwieldy — make more than one trip, ask a coworker to help, or use a hand truck, cart, or dolly instead.

A 2018 study found that workspaces of those workers who don't clean them on a regular basis are filled with harmful bacteria, including *H.pylori*, staph, *E.coli*, and *P.aeruginosa*, which puts the entire staff at risk of illnesses such as pneumonia and gastrointestinal disease.

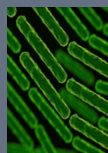
ENVIRONMENTAL TOXINS & CHEMICALS

NEVER fill containers such as water jugs or unlabeled spray bottles with any substances that might be dangerous, not even for your own use.

A surprising number of incidents reported by state of Florida employees in recent months have involved cleaning supplies such as bleach or other chemicals being mislabeled or placed into improper containers. On several occasions, employees drank from water bottles found to contain bleach or other cleaning solutions instead of water.



Toxic substances (e.g. cleaning chemicals, copier toner, etc.) must be stored safely in their original containers and clearly labeled.



Take a seat ... if you dare!



OFFICE CHAIRS

They roll right out from under you.

Try to sit, and they roll away.

They break and collapse, hurling their victims to the floor.

They can be bumped into, tripped over, and toppled.

They crush hands against desks,

pinch fingers in their mechanisms,

run over toes with their wheels.

Don't adjust them right, and they'll cause all sorts of pain.

Turn around too quickly, and they'll snap your neck.

And sometimes, they even EXPLODE.

They might seem benign, but office chairs can cause all manner of injuries, from bumps and bruises, strains and sprains, and even severed limbs (yes, really). Yet the hazards associated with rolling chairs are often underestimated, if not overlooked completely.

Innocent Victim? or ASKING FOR TROUBLE??

Rolling chairs are the most common type seen in offices – and the most dangerous, especially when misused or abused. Bouncing, jumping on, reclining too far, or leaning too hard can not only cause a fall, it can damage the chair's components and lead to structural failure.

And it cannot be emphasized enough – NEVER, EVER STAND ON A CHAIR. Wheels or no wheels, chairs are not balanced to distribute weight properly when standing on them. Even the sturdiest chair can tip. Also, the distance from the chair seat to the floor is typically too high to step down safely – many ankles have twisted as a result. Use a step stool instead.

One in five regular computer users will develop a musculoskeletal disorder (MSD) affecting the upper limbs, including nerve and muscle pain, carpal tunnel syndrome, and other repetitive stress injuries.

Ergonomic injuries account for 33% of all worker injury cases and 52% of total lost work days in the U.S.

State of Florida employees had 76 workers' compensation claims involving injuries from chairs in the first half of 2023 alone.

**Will you be
NEXT??**

Don't become the next victim!

Learn how to choose, adjust, and maintain your office chair to get the most out of your seat and prevent injuries.

MAKING OFFICE CHAIRS WHEEL-Y WORK

WHEELS & CASTERS

Wheels can be made of a variety of materials designed to be used on certain types of flooring. One of the biggest hazards concerning rolling chairs is using wheels not intended for the work surface.



Hard wheels (made of nylon or metal) are made to roll more easily on carpet (without a plastic floor protector). On hard floors (such as tile, cement, vinyl, or hardwood), hard wheels tend to glide too easily, which can cause the chair to roll away or out from under someone as they are sitting (or attempting to sit) on it.



Soft wheels (made of rubber or polyurethane) are slightly flexible, allowing them to conform to hard floors, making them less likely to glide away. They can be used on carpets with a plastic floor protector.



Rollerblade wheels are made of premium rubber (like those found on rollerblades) and can easily roll on both hard and soft surfaces.

Castors attach the wheels to the legs of the chair and allow them to swivel. Damaged, dirty, or poorly maintained castors and wheels can be dangerous — castors that swivel too easily can send the chair spinning out of control; wheels that don't spin easily enough can bring the chair to an abrupt stop, causing it to tip over. Caster hardware can become loose over time, causing the wheels to fall off. Wheels can pick up dirt, fibers, hair, food, and other debris, making them uneven, sticky, and difficult to roll.

Maintenance: Remove any large debris from the wheels, then clean smaller particles from the surface with a piece of tape. Scissors or a razor blade can be used to snip and remove fibers and hair wrapped around the caster. Wipe the wheels with rubbing alcohol or a mild cleanser. Lubricate the metal components with silicone spray and wipe away excess. Adjust the tension by loosening or tightening the screws holding the casters in place. Make sure casters are fastened securely to the chair base. Inspect the entire assembly for damage or corrosion and replace if necessary.



ARE MY WHEELS HARD OR SOFT?

If you can press the tip of a ballpoint pen into the wheels, they are soft enough to use on a hard floor or plastic carpet protector.

SOFT
wheels
HARD
floors

HARD
wheels
SOFT
floors

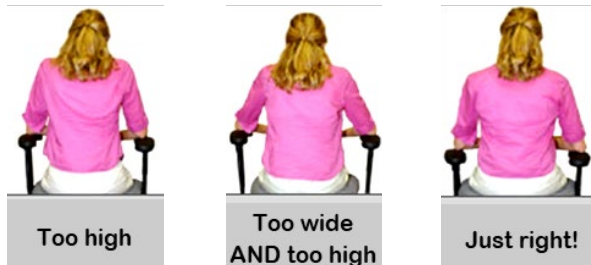
Rollerblade
anywhere!



LEGS

Many less expensive, consumer-grade chairs have four legs or fewer, making it more prone to tipping. OSHA recommends a rolling chair with at least five legs for added stability.

Humans come in all shapes and sizes, and so do office chairs — finding one with the right combination of features can make you feel a bit like Goldilocks. A well-designed chair will provide adequate support, allow a variety of sitting positions throughout the workday, and adjust to fit each individual user so that it's “just right.” Adjustability is especially important when multiple people share the same chair on different shifts.



ERGONOMICS & ADJUSTABILITY

ARMRESTS

If your chair has armrests, they must be adjustable and adjusted properly — high enough to avoid leaning, low enough to avoid raising your shoulders, close enough to avoid bending elbows outward, wide enough to avoid restricting movement in and out of the chair. The arms should be large enough to support most of the lower arm but small enough to fit under the desk in order to reach the keyboard properly. Armrests should be soft with rounded edges to avoid irritating nerves and blood vessels in the arm.

SEAT

The seat pan should be appropriately sized to provide full support to both thighs while allowing the back to be supported and the knees to bend without coming in contact with the front edge. It should be well-padded and have a rounded “waterfall” edge to take stress off the knees. It should raise and lower to allow for a variety of leg lengths and work surface heights. If the seat cannot be lowered enough to allow the user's feet to be flat on the floor, a footrest should be provided.

WEIGHT LIMITS & LIFE SPAN

Typical office chairs are made to withstand up to 250 pounds; a different chair or caster assembly may be required for users who weigh more. Most office chairs will last about seven years under regular use and with proper maintenance.

BACKREST

A proper backrest will allow users to maintain a natural and safe posture. It should be equipped with:

- Lumbar support that can be adjusted to place the outward curve into the small of the back;
- A recliner that can be adjusted to at least 15 degrees from vertical; and
- The ability to adjust the depth from the seat (forward or backward) to account for leg length. (Note: This adjustment is made on the seat pan rather than the backrest on certain models.)



COMMON OFFICE HAZARDS BY MAJOR CAUSE CODES

Workers' compensation claims for injuries at work are categorized by their cause, and each cause is given a specific code. Certain cause codes are used more frequently in certain workplaces (thankfully not many office workers are crashing water vehicles or welding at their desks). Here are the most common types of office injuries seen under each cause code:



BURN / SCALD / EXPOSURE TO HEAT OR COLD

Thermal burns caused by hot liquids or objects are the most common type in this category (e.g., spilling hot coffee, taking a plate out of the microwave), but electrical burns can also occur due to hazards such as frayed extension cords or other faulty equipment.



FALL / SLIP / TRIP

These are the most common cause of workplace injuries, especially in office settings. Common incidents include falling up or down stairs, falling from chairs (either while sitting or standing on them), falling off tables or stepstools, slipping on wet floors, slipping due to unsafe footwear, tripping over objects stored in walkways, tripping over cords strung across office spaces, tripping over rugs or damaged flooring, and walking too quickly or without care.

CAUGHT IN / BETWEEN

By far, body parts (usually fingers) being closed in doors or drawers cause the most injuries in this category. Another common office injury occurs when a person's arm, hand, or finger is squished between a chair and desk.



CUT / PUNCTURE / SCRAPE

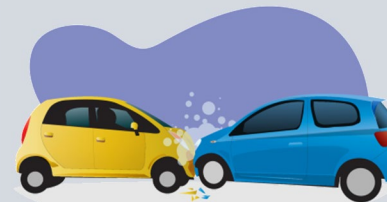
Pencils, pens, scissors, staplers, thumbtacks, paper cutters, or even paper itself can cause these type of injuries if not used carefully.



Older office equipment, such as this guillotine-style paper cutter, may be lacking modern safety features and should be replaced as soon as possible.

MOTOR VEHICLE

Navigating the office parking lot proves a challenge for many employees; vehicles colliding with other vehicles, barriers, poles, or even people cause many injuries.



MISCELLANEOUS

Absorption / Ingestion / Inhalation Cleaning products, construction dust, paint fumes, mold, and infectious diseases can pose hazards in the office.

Other Than Physical Cause of Injury Refers to psychological trauma after a specific stressful event (e.g., a fire, a violent incident, etc.) or cumulative exposure to stressful conditions that result in mental trauma.



STRAIN / INJURY BY

This cause code contains several subcategories of hazard descriptions. Here are some examples of those frequently seen in office settings:

Twisting — ankle injuries from stepping wrong; neck / back injuries caused by turning around too quickly

Holding / Carrying — pulled muscles from carrying equipment, boxes, etc.; frequently caused by carrying an object or load that is too heavy

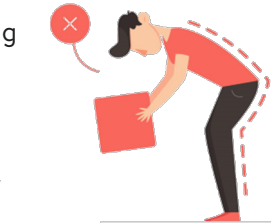
Lifting — strained back muscles from lifting boxes, office furniture, etc.; frequently caused by improper lifting techniques

Pushing / Pulling — muscle strains that often occur while pushing equipment carts, vacuum cleaners, etc.; or pushing or pulling heavy or sticky doors or drawers.

Reaching — strained muscles typically caused by people attempting to reach high shelves without using a stepstool or reaching too far across a desk or other work surface

Repetitive Motion — injuries caused by any repetitive task; carpal tunnel syndrome or other ergonomic injuries caused by using a keyboard and/or mouse

Other — body aches and pains with unknown or multiple causes, often the result of poorly designed workstations (ill-fitting chairs, screens at the wrong height, etc.) or bad working habits (poor posture, sitting or standing too long, etc.).



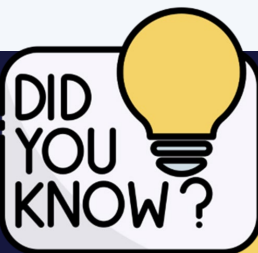
STRIKING AGAINST / STEPPING ON

Office workers coming in contact with stationary objects — walking into walls or furniture, whacking knees under desks, stepping on sharp objects — frequently find themselves with bumps, bruises, and abrasions. Being distracted or careless (texting and walking, moving too quickly, or leaving cabinet doors or desk drawers open) is the most common cause of these types of office injuries.



STRUCK / INJURED BY

These injuries occur when objects come in contact with employees, rather than the other way around (see STRIKING AGAINST). Though the most serious “struck by” injuries usually involve heavy equipment, they still occur in office settings. Objects being knocked off shelves or desks, being swung around or thrown, or even just slipping out of people’s hands can cause injuries. Collapsing furniture, whether poorly installed (bookcases not secured to walls), mishandled (chairs or boxes stacked too high), or worn out (cabinet doors with broken hinges) can also pose a serious risk.

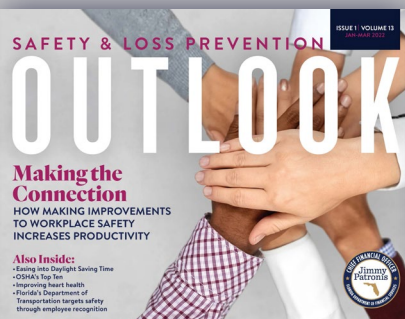


According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, slips, trips, and falls are the single most common cause of workplace injuries, resulting in nearly 700 fatalities each year.

The National Safety Council reports that slips, trips, and falls resulting in disabling injuries occur more than twice as frequently in office settings than in any other workplace environment.

Miss a previous issue? Visit the

OUTLOOK Online Library



For the complete collection visit:

<https://www.MyFloridaCFO.com/division/risk/risk-financing-loss-prevention/loss-prevention-section/safety-loss-prevention-outlook>



E-Learning

from the
DIVISION OF RISK MANAGEMENT

The safety training required per section 284.50, F.S. for all newly-appointed safety and alternate safety coordinators, previously available solely in webinar format, is now being provided through online training modules available at your convenience.

PEOPLE
FIRST



PEOPLE FIRST
TIMESHEET USERS:

- Click here to login to People First
- Click on Talent Management
- Click on Learning
- Click on Find Learning
- Type "DFS_RM" into the search bar for a list of current courses
- Click "Start Course" on the module of your choice

DRM WEBSITE
REGISTRATION

ALL OTHERS:

- Click here to access the external registration portal on the Division of Risk Management's website
- Submit your information

Registration into the People First Learning Management System will allow access to all of our current and future trainings

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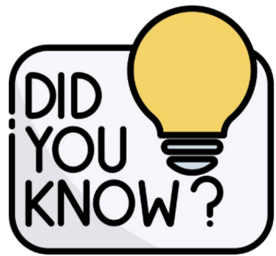


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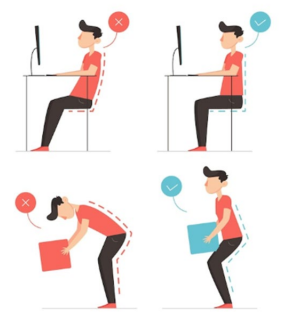


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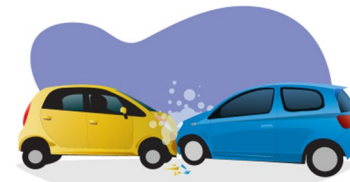


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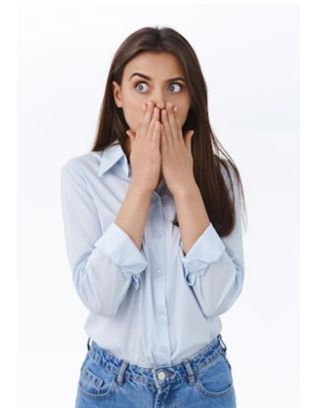


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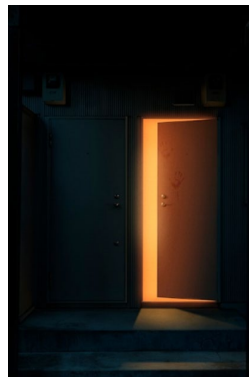


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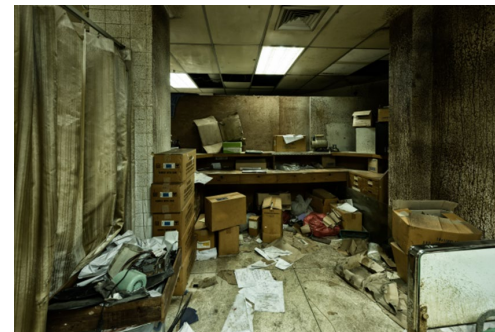


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