















### Daily Operation

6. Frequent use of photocopiers generate much heat and hazardous gases. The health risks exist if the room is poorly ventilated, and may be increased if only one member of staff is assigned to the photocopying duties because of extended duration working in the photocopying room.



- The room should be well ventilated.
- If possible the worker's duties should be rearranged so he can spend less time with the photocopier.
- Ways of reducing photocopying and shortening the time in the photocopying room should be explored.

- 7.a) Strong light emitted from photocopiers may cause discomfort or glare to the operator. Irritant gases and vapours can cause sore eyes and a sore nose, headaches and breathing problems. Exposure to such hazards may be caused by improper use of the machines, machine defects, poor ventilation or insufficient training.

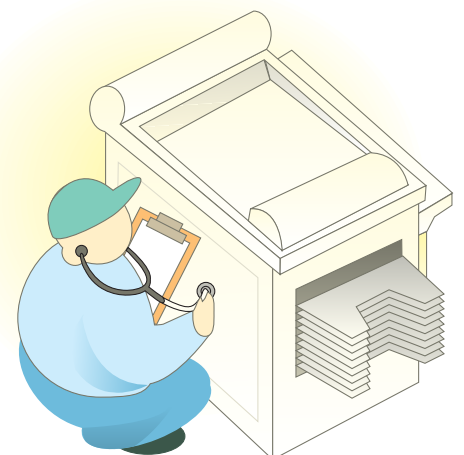


- If there is complaint of illness or irritating odour due to photocopying, follow-up action should be taken immediately. Every possibility should be explored to find the source of the problem and remedial actions should be implemented.

- 7.b) If the exposure to air contaminants exceeds the Occupational Exposure Limits (OELs) issued by the Labour Department, the contaminants are likely to cause injury to workers.



- Conduct an investigation to find out the probable cause.





- If the investigation reveals that it is probably caused by gases emitting from the photocopier, you need to take remedial actions immediately.
- The remedial actions may include improving ventilation, changing the photocopying process, reducing the amount of photocopying and proper maintenance of photocopiers.
- Assistance from experts can be sought for monitoring of air contaminants.

8. Loads of packaged paper may be used for photocopying. Handling heavy loads manually in an improper way may cause injury to the body.



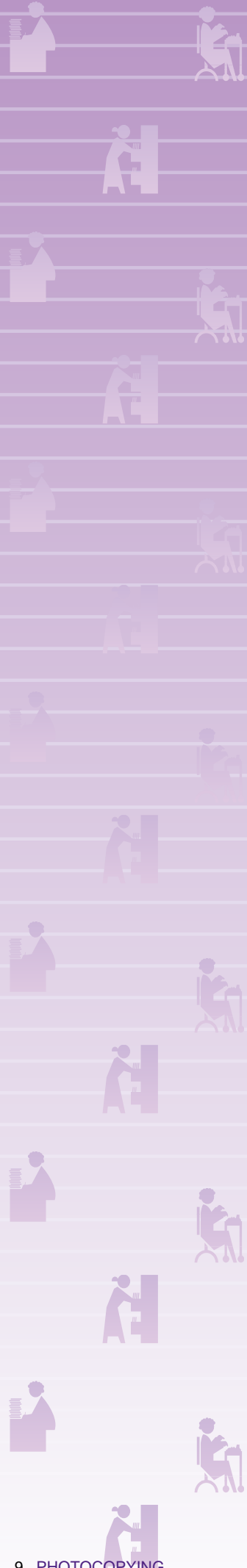
- Handle paper in small quantities and assume correct postures when doing so in order to avoid back injuries.
- For details of regulatory requirements on manual handling operations, please refer to other relevant publications by the Labour Department.

### **Instruction and Training**

9. Although modern photocopier models are user-friendly, employees should follow the instruction to use. In addition, adequate training should be provided including changing of toner cartridges and refilling of consumable chemicals. Untrained workers may come into contact with the hazardous chemicals and contract illnesses such as dermatitis.



- Proper observation of the instructions can shorten the time spent by employees at the machine and avoid contact with chemicals.
- Employees should be instructed to replace the top cover properly to prevent eye irritation from the strong light during copying.



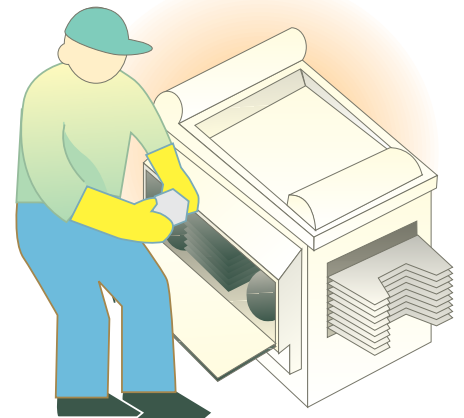
10. Hazards associated with photocopying include those of physical, chemical and ergonomic origins. Proper control of the hazards requires co-operation and participation of employees.



- Employees should be well informed of such hazards, the resultant adverse health effects and control measures required.

11. Employees may have skin contact with or inhale harmful substances in changing toner cartridges and handling chemicals.

- Provide employees with appropriate protective equipment, e.g. impervious gloves.
- Keep the protective equipment in good condition.
- Provide adequate training to the employees on when and how to use the protective equipment.



12. Though chemical spills are rare, handling such incidents improperly may expose employees to harmful substances.

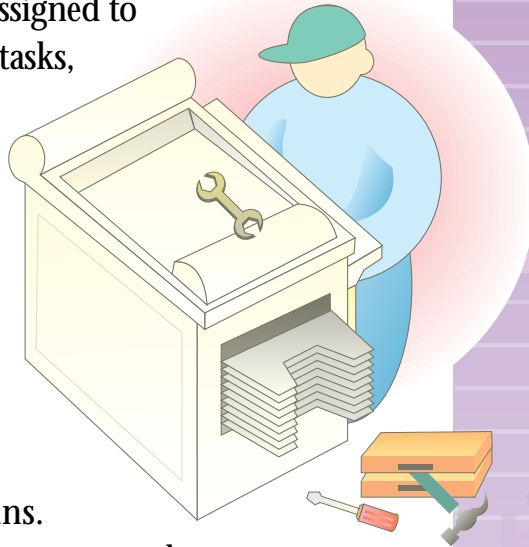
- Prepare proper procedures for handling chemical spills in advance.
- Inform employees of the procedures and provide necessary training.
- Use appropriate personal protective equipment in the cleaning up procedure.

## Maintenance

13. Employees are more likely to be exposed to hazardous chemicals when they check faulty photocopiers.



- Even if an employee is assigned to do simple maintenance tasks, he or she should be given sufficient training and be informed of the hazards involved and control measures.
- Faulty photocopiers should be checked and fixed by competent maintenance technicians. If the machine problems cannot be fixed, you should consider buying a new copier.



14. If there is no maintenance programme for the photocopier, minor defects of the photocopier cannot be spotted and fixed at an early stage and the users may be exposed to hazardous substances.



- Photocopiers should be regularly serviced by competent maintenance technicians.

## ***FURTHER INFORMATION***

For further information about the subject or assistance, please contact

**Address :** Occupational Health Service, Labour Department  
15/F, Harbour Building  
38 Pier Road, Central  
Hong Kong

**Tel :** 2852 4041

**Fax :** 2581 2049

**Home Page Address :** <http://www.labour.gov.hk>

**E-mail Address :** [enquiry@labour.gov.hk](mailto:enquiry@labour.gov.hk)

Information on the services offered by the Occupational Safety and Health Council can be obtained through hotline 2739 9000.

### ***Other Titles in the Office Environment Series***

- 1. Introduction and Housekeeping**
- 2. Lighting in Offices**
- 3. Photocopying***
- 4. Ventilation**
- 5. Office Workstation Design**
- 6. Use of Chemicals**
- 7. Manual Handling**

*THIS GUIDE IS*

*The Labour Department's contribution towards safety and health - a shared responsibility - and the Department's endeavour to serve the community.*