

Loss and Prevention Control: Safety Minute

Copier and Laser Printer Safety

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL HAZARDS? Modern dry toners are rarely a skin or eye hazard. Inhaled toner may cause respiratory irritation, but it is not carcinogenic (cancer causing) at exposure levels normally experienced in the office use of photocopiers.

Modern liquid toners also rarely irritate the skin, but exposure to solvents within them can dry and crack the skin, and mildly irritate the eyes. The same hazards apply to the various solvents used for cleaning duplicating machines. They also pose a fire risk if not stored adequately. Frequent contact with toner or other solvents may cause dermatitis or asthma.

Most modern equipment does not present a bright light hazard beyond short-term discomfort to the eyes, but it is prudent to keep the photocopier lid down. Ultra-violet radiation may also be released through the glass plate, but at very low levels.

All laser printers are classified as class 1 laser products meaning that under normal conditions the laser radiation (beam) is inaccessible and therefore not a hazard unless the shielding or enclosure around the laser is tampered with, or removed. Only properly trained technicians following the manufacturers safe working procedures should carry out maintenance.

Older or poorly maintained machines in poorly ventilated areas may emit detectable levels of various gases including ozone. Ozone has a pleasant clove-like odor. At harmful concentrations that might produce eye and respiratory tract irritation, its odor becomes strong and poignant. Severe exposure can result in lung damage. Office environments do not generally produce significant exposure levels although the occupational exposure limit can be breached if ventilation is inadequate.

Clearing paper jams in printers and other duplicating machinery will expose users to hot or moving parts, sharp edges, pinch points, or exposed electrical parts. Modern machines should have such risks designed out and should turn off automatically upon opening of the machine. Caution should be used to prevent from being burned by some of the internal parts as they do not cool off instantly.

Print Name	Signature