



FACT SHEET

MARCH 1981

LIBRARIANS

More than 100,000 women are employed as librarians in North America.
82% of all librarians are women.

Potential Hazards of Library Work

PHYSICAL HAZARDS:

VISUAL FATIGUE:

Long periods of reading or scanning small print can cause eyestrain, especially under poor lighting conditions. Extensive use of visual display screens as with computer terminals or microfiche readers can also lead to visual fatigue and headache.

MUSCLE STRAIN:

Lifting and carrying heavy volumes or stacks of books produces muscular strains which can become chronic over a long period of time. Reaching or stooping to retrieve books increases the risk of pulled muscles and backache.

EXCESSIVE STANDING OR SITTING:

Standing or walking for long periods of time causes excessive pressure to develop in the blood vessels of the legs, leading to varicose veins and swelling of the feet and ankles. Conversely, remaining seated for long periods, especially in poorly designed chairs, can lead to backache and promote circulatory problems.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS and TOXIC EXPOSURES:

DUST, SPORES:

If shelves are not cleaned regularly, books can become dust-traps, harboring spores which can cause allergic reactions in certain individuals. Over-exposure to a dust-laden environment can lead to respiratory problems.

TALC:

Handling books made with talc-treated paper can lead to the inadvertent ingestion of talc, which has been linked to cancer of the lungs, particularly if it is asbestos contaminated.

BENZENE, TOLUENE:

Undiluted benzene is used to restore faded print. This contaminant is associated with various blood diseases such as leukemia, and should be used only where proper ventilation and disposal techniques are provided. Toluene, found in rubber cement and some spray fixatives, can cause drowsiness, which leads to increased risk of accidents. It may also be contaminated with benzene.

METHANOL AND AMMONIA:

Used in many duplicating-machine solvents, these substances can be very irritating to the eyes, nose, and throat.

OZONE:

This toxic gas is characterized by a sweetish smell, and is generated by many copying-machines. Over-exposure can cause irritation to the sinuses and lungs. Copying-machines should be well-ventilated, and exposure kept to a minimum.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP! CONTACT US AT:

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