

Health and Safety Information Sheet

Suitability of chair castors used on smooth, hard floor surfaces



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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
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University Health Board

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Risk Level - HIGH

ISSUE

It has been identified that there are many chairs being used in environments across ABUHB with smooth, hard floor surfaces without the appropriate rubber or brake-loaded casters. This has led to staff members falling off office chairs, sustaining injury (including loss of consciousness), and resulting in loss-time absences from work.

A very important factor to consider when procuring an office chair that often gets overlooked is whether the chair will be used on a carpeted floor or on a hard surface floor such as wood, laminate, tile or vinyl.

PROBLEM

Hard floor chair casters are standard on most chairs and are made for carpeted floors, however, due to the clinical nature of healthcare, the majority of ABUHB work environments are fitted with hard floor surfaces, such as vinyl.

Hard chair casters and smooth, hard floor surfaces do not interact safely creating simple motion as the casters are able to roll too freely causing chairs to accelerate and "skate" away when a person is going to sit down or tries to get out of the chair.



The British Standard pertaining to office furniture states that a test of rolling resistance should be carried out when each chair is installed, and each chair should have information about the choice of casters in relation to the floor surface.

In addition, The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 requires suitable seating (including suitability of castors) to be provided to employees whose work includes operations of a kind that the work (or a substantial part of it) can or must be done sitting.

ACTION REQUIRED

Managers and risk assessors **MUST** undertake an assessment of the type of chairs being used on smooth, hard flooring in their area to mitigate any foreseeable risk.

If deemed to be high risk i.e. potential for chairs to move unexpectedly on hard flooring the following steps must be followed:

- Immediately take chair(s) out of use; and
- Liaise with chair(s) manufacturer(s) and ABUHB procurement to identify suitable replacement soft floor/brake-loaded casters
- If replacement soft floor/brake-loaded castors cannot be sourced for the existing chairs, then new chairs will need to be purchased with the appropriate castors installed

FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT:

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