

How to handle a boss who's a hoarder



What can you do about a boss who's a hoarder?

One admin writes, "My boss carried several boxes of files into the office one day because his wife told him to remove them from their garage. They have been sitting in the office (still in the boxes) for more than two years! Every time I try to straighten up his office, he won't let me throw anything away."

Hoarding is a popular topic these days, thanks to reality television. But what actually makes for a hoarder?

By definition, hoarders are those who acquire a large number of things that appear to be useless—stuff that makes a space so cluttered, people can't function properly in it.

It's not the same as having a cluttered, paper-filled office, or even a chronically disorganized office.

According to a recent CareerBuilder survey, 51% of workers admit they still have paper files in their offices, and 38% say that between 50 to 100% of their desk surface is covered with work and other materials. Thirty six percent of workers claim they have paper files from more than a year ago.

Our advice: For an extremely cluttered office, chip away at the problem. Suggest moving the boxes into a storage closet or offer to weed through a file one at a time. Holding a meeting in a cluttered office might draw attention to its crowded state, and spur action.

If you're certain it's a case of hoarding, consider speaking to a higher-up or to human resources about the problem. They may be able to broach the topic as a safety issue.