Do You Know What to Do in Case of Fire?

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Meeting Kit

Safety Talk

What’s at Stake

Every 85 seconds, a fire breaks out somewhere in Canada. And in the United States, the number of fatal work injuries resulting from fires and explosions in 2010 rose to 187, an increase of 65% over the previous year. Of the 187 fatalities, 82 occurred in multiple fatality incidents.

What’s the Danger

Many people seem to have an “it will never happen here” attitude about fires. But fire is not very selective about where it starts or what it burns.

Example

A welder was welding a pipe in a warehouse from an elevated platform. When a fire broke out, there wasn’t a fire extinguisher nearby. By the time the worker found one, the fire had engulfed the warehouse—and a co-worker died.

How to Protect Yourself

Have you ever considered what you would do if you suddenly saw or smelled a fire in your work area? Take the time right now to ensure you're ready to respond.

In case of fire, you'll need to:

Notify others: Are emergency numbers posted in a visible location next to the telephone in your work area? Do you know how to describe your exact location to the fire department? Where is the nearest fire alarm? Do you know how to activate it?

Follow the emergency plan: What is your company's emergency plan? Where would everyone meet so your supervisor can be sure you are safely out? Who is responsible for helping co-workers needing assistance? Do you have any other duties such as closing windows and doors or checking employee washrooms?

Find your exits: Which fire exits would you use? Can you find two fire exits—right now— from the room that you are in? Always plan two escape routes, so if one becomes blocked by fire you have an alternative exit.

Use the stairs. Do you know that you should never use an elevator when the fire alarm sounds? Elevators can jam between floors or accidentally drop to the floor that the fire is on. When the doors open, you could be subjected to flames, hot gases and toxic smoke.

Fight or flee: Do you know how to use a fire extinguisher? Some small fires, about the size of a wastepaper basket, can be successfully fought with a portable fire extinguisher. But if you're not sure what you are doing with the extinguisher or if the fire is spreading, get out!

You should not fight a fire when:

- A properly rated fire extinguisher is not readily available.
- You are not trained or do not feel comfortable using a fire extinguisher.
- There is a chance that the fire could block your escape

route.
- The fire is too large to fight or seems out of control.

Final Word

A workplace fire is an experience you don’t want to have. Work safely to prevent fires, and know what to do if one occurs.