Fire Safety – In Case of Fire Meeting Kit

What’s At Stake

You are responsible for fire prevention at work for your safety and that of your co-workers. The best way to prevent workplace fires is to be aware of and on the lookout for potential fire hazards.

What’s the Danger

GENERAL FIRE SAFETY HAZARDS – THREE THINGS

- sources of ignition include heaters, lighting, naked flames, electrical equipment, smokers’ materials (cigarettes, matches etc), and anything else that can get very hot or cause sparks.
- sources of fuel include wood, paper, plastic, rubber or foam, loose packaging materials, waste rubbish and furniture.
- sources of oxygen include the air around us.

HAZARDS AND DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES THAT CAUSE FIRES

Many substances found in the workplace can cause fires or explosions. These range from the obvious, eg flammable chemicals, petrol, cellulose paint thinners and welding gases, to the less obvious – engine oil, grease, packaging materials, dusts from wood, flour and sugar.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

WORKPLACE TIPS TO PREVENT FIRES

#1 Carry out through risk assessments

Risk assessments should identify fire hazards – what could cause a fire to start? Then they should assess the level of risk posed, consider who could be affected, and how fire risks can be mitigated. You can then implement control measures proportionate to the level of risk.

#2 Proper Management Of Electrical/Flammable Materials

- Report any electrical hazard you spot. Faulty or bad wiring is a major fire hazard. If employees see any kind of electrical hazard in the workplace, it's important to report it immediately.
- Do not overload outlets and circuits. Only plug in appliances and electronics that are being used, and be sure to use outlets that are not overloaded. Plugging too many items into one circuit can cause the circuit to overload, which is a fire hazard.
- Do not use damaged electrical outlets or cords. If you spot a damaged electrical outlet or cord, it's important to throw it away immediately. Frayed cords and exposed wires can be deadly.
- Ensure proper storage of flammable materials. If your company handles flammable materials, they may need to be stored in a flammables cabinet. Certain chemicals cannot be stored by each other or they may combust.
- Keep combustibles away from electrical equipment. Piled up trash and recycling are combustible fire hazards. Keep trash, recycling, and any other combustibles, like stacks of paper away from electrical equipment that could cause a fire.

#3 Keep Your Workplace Clean And Tidy

Untidy workplaces contain more health and safety hazards than clean and tidy ones, and many of these hazards are related to fire safety. With more clutter around the workplace, the "fire load" of the area or building increases.

#4 Pay Attention To Fire-Prone Areas

- Large electrical storage rooms, such as the server room.
- Laboratories and other designated areas containing hazardous or flammable materials.
- Workers must take additional care in these spaces and unplug any electrical equipment or appliances when not in use. Ensure proper storage of flammable materials, as they need to be kept away from high-heat environments and should not be stored near incompatible items.

#5 Keep Exits Clear & Mark Emergency Exits

Emergency exits must be kept clear at all times. It’s also important to ensure that emergency exit diagrams are posted and emergency exit signs are well lit.

#6 Appoint Fire Wardens

You should have at least one fire warden in your workplace. Fire wardens are members of staff who are responsible for taking control of creating and maintaining fire safety procedures.

#7 Properly Maintain Your Workplace Fire Detection And Suppression System & Fire Extinguishers

The best defense against any workplace fire is your workplace’s fire detection and suppression system.

In order to be successful using fire extinguishers:

- Conduct monthly inspections to verify they are charged and ready for use.
- Make sure they are not blocked or obscured from visibility.
- Provide designated employee training.

#8 Train Employees On Fire Safety Procedures & Evacuation Plan

Every workplace should have a unique fire safety procedure and evacuation plan. It’s important to make sure your employees have access to regular, updated fire safety training that is tailored to the fire hazards present in your workplace. Your fire safety procedure may include:

- Designate and assign the roles needed for your workplace fire evacuation plan.
- Schedule recurring fire evacuation drills, according to your industry and local fire safety requirements.
- Establish an employee check-in location.

WHEN THERE IS A FIRE

Immediately call 911.

Know and understand the fire emergency and evacuation plan in the workplace.

Never use the elevator. Walk—don’t run—down the stairs.

If you cannot evacuate:

- Remain calm and put as much distance as possible between yourself and the fire.
- Seal all cracks with wet materials (towels, jackets) to prevent smoke from seeping into the room.
- Wait at the window; shout for help and signal your location by waving the most visible object
- Open the window for air, but try not to break it; you may need to close it if smoke begins to seep in.s

FINAL WORD

The bottom line in maintaining fire safety in the workplace is what could cause a fire to start. This workplace undertaking is encapsulated in conducting a risk assessment to identify fire hazards.