Fire Safety is Everyone’s Responsibility

Safety Talk

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Fire safety is an extremely important part of any workplace safety program. It’s everyone’s responsibility to help prevent fires.

Here are some fire-safe tips:

- Practice good worksite housekeeping habits. Do not let trash and waste material accumulate. Empty trash bins regularly. Oily rags must be stored and disposed of in covered metal containers, according to company policy.
- Do not store materials or allow clutter to accumulate around exits and stairways. Fire doors should be kept closed as directed. Fire exits should always remain free and accessible.
- A common cause of workplace fires is machinery or equipment which becomes overheated. Be sure to follow operating guidelines to prevent overloading. Follow manufacturer’s instructions in using and maintaining equipment.
- Electrical malfunctions are also a major contributor to fires in the workplace. Electrical equipment should be checked regularly for signs of trouble such as damaged cords or worn insulation. Never overload circuits, and never force circuit breakers to remain in the “on” position. Only qualified and authorized personnel should carry out electrical repairs and maintenance, but everyone is responsible for being alert to the signs of electrical malfunction.
- It is important to understand the fire hazards of the materials with which you work. They may be combustible,

flammable, explosive or reactive. Read the labels and know where to locate the Material Safety Data Sheet for further information. Carefully follow any instructions when you are using any materials which might pose hazards.

- Be sure to observe any smoking restrictions. Smoke only in designated areas. Smoking in unauthorized areas such as storage rooms has resulted in serious fires. Do not empty ashtrays until smoking materials are cold.
- Observe company security policies and be alert to any suspicious persons or activities. Many workplace fires are set by arsonists; do your part to prevent these incidents.

Know what to do in case of a fire. Make sure your safety training includes this information:

- What is your responsibility in case of fire ? to report the fire, fight it or evacuate the building?
- Where is the fire alarm located?
- Where are the fire extinguishers located? Do you know how to use them, and on what kinds of fires?
- Do you know how to use other fire emergency equipment such as fire blankets, hoses and sprinklers?
- What safety procedures should you carry out in case of a fire? Are you responsible for shutting down equipment or operations before you leave?
- Do you know where you and your co-workers are supposed to meet for a head count after evacuating the plant?

Everyone has a responsibility for preventing fire. It is up to you to report any unsafe situation, and to correct it if you are qualified and authorized to do so.