Prevent Workplace Fires

Safety Talk

How This Affects You:

Many workers like you are killed or injured in workplace fires each year. And many workplaces, just like yours, never reopen after a fire.

The most effective way to fight a fire is to keep it from starting in the first place. Fires can only start when oxygen, heat and fuel are present. So basic fire prevention is to keep these elements apart. Here are some tips:

- Inspect storage facilities regularly for fire hazards. Risk increases when large volumes of materials are packed together.
- Take extra precautions with combustible materials and flammable liquids. Keep them away from lights and machinery.
- Fuels, paints and flammable solvents should be kept in approved storage containers.
- Dispose of oily rags in covered metal containers emptied daily.
- Keep all heating equipment in good operating condition. Vents and smoke pipes should be sealed and located away from combustibles.

Electrical equipment can be a source of ignition. Prevent fires by ensuring that:

- Wiring is in good condition.
- Extension and appliance cords are the correct size, and not frayed or worn.
- All junction, switch, outlet and panel boxes are covered and secured.
- Each circuit has a fuse or breaker of the correct capacity.

There are a few miscellaneous prevention measures you can take as

well:

Recharge battery-operated materials handling equipment in designated areas, and refuel forklifts outside the building. Propane, gasoline and batteries all present fire hazards.

Welding should be carried out in areas free of combustibles and surrounded by fire protection screens. Keep a fire extinguisher handy.

Place smoke alarms and fire detectors in areas where fires may start. Test them monthly, and replace any batteries at least once a year. Keep escape routes and fire exits clear. Correct and report unsafe situations.

And don’t smoke in NO SMOKING areas. The signs are there for a reason.

You should know:

- The location of firefighting equipment and how to use it;
- Your fire evacuation procedures and escape route, and; .
- Which equipment and operations to shut down before you leave your post.

Finally: Arson is the cause of many fires. Use security measures to keep out unauthorized persons and report any suspicious persons or activities.

Remember: Fire safety on the job is everyone’s responsibility—especially yours!