

Fire Safety in the Workplace

Creating a Fire-Safe Workplace

Housekeeping

- Keep your workplace clutter free.
- Keep exits, stairways, storage areas, staff rooms and work areas free from debris such as empty boxes, waste paper and dirty rags.
- Keep flammable liquid storage to a minimum and only in approved containers.
- Keep large quantities of flammable liquids in an approved storage cabinet.
- Follow your building's security measures and keep unauthorized people out of your workplace.
- Keep alleys and other areas around your building well lit

Appliances

- Unplug or turn off all appliances including coffee makers, hot plates and burners at the end of each day.
- Allow air to circulate around heat producing equipment such as photocopiers, computer terminals and heaters.

Smoking

- Cigarettes, matches and lighters cause a large number of fires.
- Smoke only where permitted and use large, non-tip ashtrays. Thoroughly soak butts with water before discarding.

Electrical Safety

- Replace electrical cords that have cracked insulation or broken connectors.
- Do not overload electrical circuits.
- Never run electrical cords across doorways, under carpets or where they can be stepped on or pinched.

Portable Fire Extinguishers

- Everyone should read the extinguisher instructions and be trained in the safe operation of fire extinguishers.
- Ensure everyone has left the building before attempting to fight a fire.
- Use portable fire extinguishers to extinguish and control small, contained fires until the fire department arrives.
- Portable fire extinguishers are not designed to fight large fires or those that may spread quickly.

Prepare for Emergencies

During a fire, everyone's safety depends on good preparation and efficient evacuation.

Employers should...

- Post fire escape plans in a prominent location on every level.
- Ensure all employees are familiar with exit locations, escape routes and fire extinguisher locations.
- Conduct regular fire drills.
- Post the emergency numbers on or near all telephones.
- Make provisions for safe evacuation of employees with disabilities by appointing someone to assist them.
- Appoint and train a fire warden on each level of the building to ensure safe evacuation and ongoing safety programs.

Employees should...

- Know the location of all building exits.
- Know the location of the nearest fire alarms and how to use them.
- Count the doors or desks between their work area and the nearest exit. During a fire, exit signs may not be visible due to smoke or a power failure.

If a Fire Occurs

- Sound the alarm and leave the building immediately, closing all doors behind you.
- If smoke blocks your primary exit, use another one. If you must exit through the smoke, stay low by crawling on your hands and knees.
- Check doors before opening them. Kneel or crouch at the door, reach up and touch the door, knob and frame. If you feel warmth on or around the door, use another escape route. If the door feels cool, open it slowly and carefully with your shoulder against it. Slam the door shut if you see flames or smoke on the other side.
- Call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number, no matter how small the fire appears to be.
- Follow directions from fire and security personnel. Once outside, move away from the building to the designated meeting location, out of the way of firefighters. Remain outside until the fire department says you may go back in.