

T E A C H T O O L S

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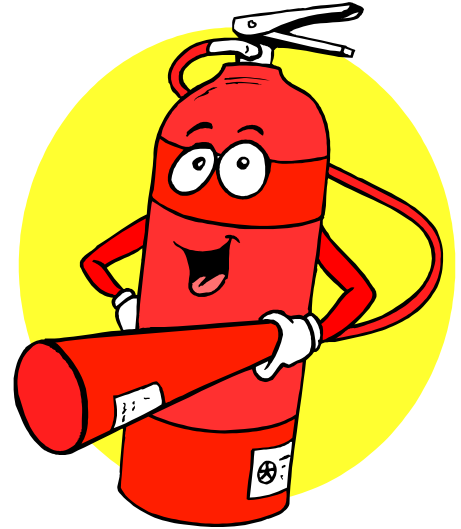
A guide to assist in training employees.

#24 - Fire Safety

provided by:

Kansas Municipal Insurance Trust

Fire Safety



Meeting Objectives—

To learn the City's fire alarm system and response/evacuation plans so all workers will know what to do quickly in case of a fire.

Suggested Materials to Have on Hand—

- Copy of City's Emergency Response Plan
- Map of work area showing fire exits
- Alarm (or tape recording of alarm) to demonstrate signal
- Smoke detector (type used in City Buildings)

Introduction/Overview—

This building is made of fire-retardant materials and equipped with sprinklers. You have learned to recognize fire hazards and what you can do to prevent fires, but there is still always a chance that a fire could break out, and our city has a complete system to warn you of the fire and to get you out quickly and safely.

Fire is just one type of emergency covered in an emergency response plan. We are not going to talk about fighting fires. Our whole focus today is making sure we:

- Know what to do if we spot even a small fire
- Can recognize fire warning alarms
- Know what to do when an alarm goes off

The reason we are spending time on something that seems so simple is to make sure we all memorize what has to be done. Fire moves fast, and we have to do the same. It is not unusual for small fires to become big ones because no one knows what to do when the little fire is spotted.

In a fire—or any serious emergency—you do not have time to experiment or go look up what you are supposed to do. The lights may go out, or there may be so much smoke that you cannot see anything. You have got to know what to do and where to go—and do it without thinking twice.

It is very possible that in the next few months you will get to test what we have learned in a fire drill. Our fire drill will not be like the ones you remember from school. I will not line you up and lead you out like your teachers did. It will be up to you to know the closest evacuation route and take it. It will be up to me to do the same for myself and to see that you are all accounted for once we get out of the work area.

Regulations and Frequent Violations—

Regulations require organizations to have an emergency action plan which includes escape routes and procedures in case of an emergency. We will be discussing these aspects of our plan today.

In addition, the regulation requires cities to install/maintain fire-detection systems and to service and test them regularly.

Employers must install alarm systems that provide warning for necessary emergency action as called for in the emergency action plan, or for reaction time for safe escape of employees from the workplace or the immediate work area, or both.

The regulation states that these alarms must get through to employees on the worksite. It states specifically that the alarm has to be a distinctive and recognizable signal that must be heard or seen above the noise or light in the work area. Cities are given some flexibility in the type of alarm system they are permitted to use. Very noisy facilities, for instance, may prefer flashing strobe lights to a horn or whistle.

The bottom line is that the alarms have to be there, and you have to know about them. The regulation also requires employers to maintain these systems, to test them every two months, and to post emergency phone numbers near the phones.

Although these requirements may seem pretty basic to employee safety, not all cities meet them.

Protection Against Hazards—

(Note: This section and the Safety Procedures section are designed for an “average” workplace. You will probably have to modify them to fit yours.)

If there should be a fire here, we have a number of built-in protections to keep it from getting out of hand. In addition to fire-retardant building materials, our protections include:

- Smoke alarms that will go off if there is smoke from a fire. Sometimes other types of smoke will set them off, too, as you have probably learned in your own kitchen. It is better that they be too sensitive than not sensitive enough.
- A sprinkler system that automatically goes into operation in a fire.
- An alarm system that is set off by the person who spots the fire to warn other employees to get out of the area and alert our firefighting team and the local fire department.

The sprinkler system acts on its own. Your only concern is to be sure you do not stack or organize materials in a way that would block it.

Smoke alarms act on their own, too. Ours look like this (show) and are placed in these locations (list).

The smoke alarms are tested regularly to make sure they are working. Sometimes the batteries fail in between tests. If you notice a smoke alarm whose little light isn't on, report it to maintenance or the safety coordinator so it can be checked out.

Safety Procedures—

The most important part of the system for you is the warning alarm.

There are alarms in these locations (list).

If you spot a fire, the first thing to do is turn on the alarm. Do not stop to decide if the fire is so small that you can put it out yourself. Do not think it is someone else's job to report it. Turn on the alarm.

There may be times when you can get a fire extinguisher and put out the fire. We will talk about that in another meeting. But most of the time, that should be left to people who have received special training for the job.

Once you have turned on the alarm, the next step is to follow our evacuation plan and get out safely. Act quickly and follow these procedures:

1. Turn off any equipment.
2. Close any windows that don't lead to fire-escape routes.
3. Leave quickly by your assigned evacuation route. If you see anyone who is not getting out, alert them so they can get to safety.
4. Report to your assigned waiting place.

If you hear the alarm, follow the same steps. Here is what our fire alarm sounds like (demonstrate). If you hear it, shut down the equipment, close the windows, follow the evacuation route, and get out quickly.

Do not panic! You know what to do and if you do it, you should be fine. That's the point of this training.

Now here is a map of our work area, with all the fire exits marked. You will each get a copy of this at the end of the session. The fire exits are located at (list).

When there is a fire, walk through that exit and follow this route (describe) out of the building.

Our assigned place to wait out a fire is (describe).

It is very important that you go there and only there, because I will be doing a head count. If you are missing, we will think you are trapped inside. You do not want a firefighter risking his life looking for you when you are really talking with a friend from another department or getting something out of your car. Go to your assigned area and wait until I say it is okay not to be there.

This may sound like overkill to you, but in a real fire, there is so much smoke and activity that it is really important for us to just stay safe and out of everyone's way. There is no room for debate or for fooling around.

In a fire drill, do exactly the same thing. First, you will not know it is practice until it is over. And second, the whole point of the drill is to give you practice in evacuating quickly and correctly so you'll do it automatically if there is a real fire.

First Aid

If there is a real fire, you may have to help with first aid until medical help arrives. Here is what to do:

- If clothing catches fire, stop, drop to the floor or ground, and roll to smother the flames.
- If someone has inhaled smoke, get the person to fresh air immediately. If they are not breathing and you know CPR, administer it. Otherwise, get someone who can.
- If someone is on fire, wrap the person in a blanket or coat.
- If someone has been burned, cut away any loose clothing, but do not remove clothing that is stuck to a burn. Put cool water on the burns, then, if possible, cover them with a moist sterile dressing. If the arms or legs have been burned, elevate them.

And whatever you do, get medical attention for the person immediately.

Suggested Discussion Questions—

1. Where are the alarms in your area located?
2. What do you do if you spot a fire?
3. What do you do if you hear a fire alarm?
4. Where are the fire exits in our area?
5. Where do you go if there is a fire?
6. What do you do when we get there?
7. What do you do in a fire drill?

Wrap-Up—

When it comes to fires, your most important job is preventing them.

But if there is a fire, you have to know what to do and do it fast. There is no time to lose in a real fire. You will get a copy of our map with fire exits marked on it and a list of procedures to follow, including where to go in case of a fire. And remember these basics:

1. If you spot a fire, turn on the alarm immediately.
2. If you hear a fire alarm, get out immediately.
3. In both cases, shut off equipment, close windows, take your assigned evacuation route, and assemble in your assigned place.
4. If your clothing catches fire, Stop, Drop, and Roll.

Sample Handout—

Fire Alarm and Response Safety Checklist

Map of work area showing fire exits and evacuation route, with these instructions:

1. If you see a fire, your most important job is to get out safely. Then: Turn on the alarm immediately.
 2. If you have time:
 - shut off equipment
 - close windows that don't lead to fire escapes
 - warn others
 - take assigned evacuation route and assemble in assigned location.
 3. If you are on fire: Stop, Drop, and Roll.
 4. Do not panic. You are prepared.
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