

SAFETY MATTERS

FIRE SAFTEY

October is fire safety month! On average fire kills or injures at least one person on the job every day in the U.S. It also causes thousands of injuries every year and costs millions of dollars in property damage and numerous lost jobs.

Work place fires are most commonly caused by:

- Improperly used or maintained electrical equipment
- Careless smoking
- Improperly used or stored flammable equipment
- Poor housekeeping

To avoid electrical fires follow these Do's and Don'ts:

DO:

- Replace wires when insulation gets frayed or worn
- Use the correct fuse for the job
- Use extension cords that are in good condition and adequate for the task
- Check that ground connections are sound
- Keep combustible materials away from lights and machinery

DON'T:

- Use temporary wiring
- Overload motors, circuits, and outlets
- Leave heating equipment machinery running unattended or overnight

Follow these following rules when working with flammable liquids:

- Keep away from heat and cigarettes
- Use only in areas with good ventilation
- Store in approved metal containers
- Ground containers when transferring materials to prevent static electricity as an ignition source
- Only take out what you need for a job
- Clean up spills and leaks quickly
- Remove clothing that has absorbed liquids immediately
- Don't store "empty" flammable liquid containers near heat sources unless they've been tested and OK'd for a job
- Never cut a drum or container that contained gasoline or other flammable liquids

Good housekeeping and common sense can also prevent fires.

Remember to:

- Keep motors and machine tools free of dust and grease
- Don't let transmission shafts or bearings overheat
- Dispose of combustible scrap
- Check chemical labels and MSDS's so you don't use or store incompatible substances together
- Keep passage and fire doors clear
- Don't store oxygen cylinders near combustible materials
- Don't smoke near anything that could burn

It's every worker's responsibility to know how to escape from a fire.

- Learn your company's emergency plan
- Practicing evacuations is a good idea

If you spot a fire get to safety, telling others about the fire as you go, then sound the alarm. Call 9-1-1 or the fire department so that trained professionals can take care of the fire. Then follow your company's emergency plan.

Do you know how to properly use a fire extinguisher? Think of the acronym PASS and follow these easy steps.

1. **P**ull the pin
2. **A**im the hose at the base of the fire
3. **S**tand back about 8 feet
4. **S**queeze the trigger

When using the fire extinguisher always remember:

- Make sure your first shot is on target – the fire extinguisher only lasts 3 to 20 seconds
- Make sure you don't blow burning papers out of wastebasket fires
- Never put water on an electrical fire or piece of electrical equipment
- Don't attempt to fight a fire that is too big for you!