



NPAIP/PACT

Risk Management Bulletin

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Fire Safety-The Human Element

Even though there are 70-80,000 workplace fires in the U.S. annually, only 15% result from a catastrophic failure of equipment. Meaning, 85% of fires are caused by factors related to human behavior and are totally preventable with the proper pro-active fire prevention plan in place.

Common Fire Hazards & Their Control

Heating Equipment:

- Improperly installed, operated or maintained furnaces and other heating equipment can lead to a fire.
- Equipment should be installed and serviced annually by a licensed technician.
- Combustible material should never be kept in furnace rooms.
- Temporary heating units should not generally be used in public buildings.



Electrical:

- Misused, damaged, improperly maintained or overloaded electrical equipment is a common cause of fire.
- Extension cords should only be used for temporary power to equipment that is being used by someone "now."
- Cords should never be left coiled up while plugged in. Inductive heating can be caused resulting in insulation damage.
- Circuit breakers should be turned off and on every six months to ensure they are functioning properly.

Mechanical Friction:

- Equipment that is not properly maintained or cleaned can lead to fires.
- Bearings on ventilation equipment and conveyors should be kept properly aligned and lubricated.
- Loaders and forklifts should be kept cleaned and free of combustible material.

Proximity Hazards:

- Hazards outside of buildings can expose them to the risk of fire.
- Fuel tanks near buildings should be installed to current codes and protected from vehicle collisions by a barricade.
- Dumpsters should be at least 30 feet from buildings.
- Weeds/brush/grass should be kept mowed back at least 30 feet from building.

Despite all the precautions, fires do happen so **be prepared**. Remember the **Fire Defense Triad**:

Detection/Notification - discovering the fire and alerting fire department

Emergency Egress - well-marked safe ways to leave the building

Incipient Suppression - sprinkler systems, fire hoses and portable extinguishers

For more information about fire safety controls, contact a NPAIP/PACT loss control representative:

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Disclaimer:

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