

TOOLBOX TALK

Fire Prevention

WHY THIS MATTERS

Workplace fires and explosions kill over 200 workers and injure more than 5,000 every year (BLS). Fire departments respond to 36,500+ fires at industrial properties annually (NFPA). Hot work causes 34% of workplace fires. Most fires are preventable with proper controls.

200+

Workplace fire/explosion deaths per year (BLS)

5,000+

Workplace fire injuries per year (BLS)

100%

Workplace fires are preventable

5 Rules to Prevent Workplace Fires

Fire prevention is everyone's responsibility — every shift, every day:

1

MAINTAIN GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

Remove combustible waste, oily rags, and debris regularly. A clean site is a fire-safe site.

2

CONTROL IGNITION SOURCES

Hot work permits required. No smoking near flammables. Inspect electrical equipment for damage.

3

STORE FLAMMABLES PROPERLY

Approved containers and cabinets. Away from heat, sparks, and ignition sources. Quantities limited.

4

KEEP FIRE EQUIPMENT ACCESSIBLE

Extinguishers visible, charged, and unblocked. Know locations. Inspect monthly. Clear access always.

5

KNOW YOUR EVACUATION PLAN

Know your exits, assembly point, and alarm sound. Practice drills. Never use elevators during a fire.

Daily Fire Prevention Checklist

- Are all fire extinguishers visible, accessible, and fully charged?
- Are flammable materials stored in approved containers away from heat?
- Are exit routes clear, unblocked, and properly marked?
- Are hot work permits in place for all welding/cutting/grinding?
- Does everyone know the evacuation route and assembly point?

Common Fire Hazards on Construction Sites

Hot work

Welding, cutting, grinding near combustibles. 34% of all workplace fires. Always use a hot work permit.

Electrical

Damaged cords, overloaded circuits, daisy-chained extensions. 24% of structural fires. Inspect daily.

Flammable liquids

Gasoline, solvents, adhesives, paints stored improperly or near heat sources. Use approved cabinets.

Oily rags/Waste

Oily rags in regular trash spontaneously combust. Use self-closing metal containers only.

Temporary heating

Propane heaters, salamanders near combustibles. Maintain clearance. Never leave unattended.

Smoking

Cigarettes near flammable storage or fuel areas. Enforce designated smoking areas away from hazards.

Common Mistakes That Start Fires

- ✗ Hot work without clearing combustibles or posting a fire watch — the #1 cause of workplace fires
- ✗ Blocking fire extinguishers with materials — when seconds count, access must be immediate
- ✗ Overloading electrical circuits or using damaged cords — electrical fires start silently behind walls
- ✗ Storing oily rags in regular trash bins — spontaneous combustion is real and kills

Safety Tips to Remember

- ✓ PASS: Pull pin, Aim at base, Squeeze handle, Sweep side to side — learn it, practice it
- ✓ Fire extinguishers are for small fires ONLY — if it's bigger than a trash can, evacuate immediately
- ✓ Know TWO ways out — your primary exit may be blocked by fire. Always have a backup route
- ✓ Never re-enter a burning building — once you're out, stay out. Let firefighters handle it

Discussion Questions for Your Team

1. Where are the nearest fire extinguishers to our work area?
2. What is our evacuation route and assembly point?
3. Are there any flammable materials stored improperly on site right now?
4. Who is trained to use a fire extinguisher on our crew?
5. When was our last fire drill or evacuation practice?

TOOLBOX TALK SIGN-OFF

Date: _____ Supervisor: _____

Project: _____ Location: _____

Attendance sheet attached: Yes