



032: Fire Evacuation

Preparation

When entering any work area, note the location of fire exits and fire extinguishers. You will need an exit to get out of the building, and you may need an extinguisher to get to the exit.

To locate exits, look for exit signs on the perimeter. Report to your foreman any doors that are locked with any device other than a breakaway lock. Such locking is a violation of federal law and has often been a death sentence for workers.

Locate more than one exit. If you are on a floor other than the ground floor, you will be exiting into a stairwell.

If any exit is not clearly marked, notify your foreman. If the path to an exit is not supplied with the necessary emergency lighting and exit signs with arrows, notify your foreman.

To locate extinguishers, look for red stripes on columns or similar indications. Find the extinguisher and note its type. Typically, you will want a Type B or Type C, which both use an extinguishing gas. Check to see if the extinguisher is fully charged or not. If not, notify your foreman so the work area can be made safe.

Escaping

If you hear a fire alarm while in an equipment room, leave immediately. Rooms that contain generators often have automated fire doors that trap inside, and the extinguishing agent will asphyxiate you.

Your primary goal is to get out of the building and to an assembly area. If you don't smell smoke and can quickly shut off power to machinery near you, shut it off. If you do smell smoke or cannot find the shut-off, leave the machinery and evacuate as quickly as possible.

You can use an extinguisher to make an escape route through the flames, rather than using it to put out the flame. If you need to make an escape route through the flames, then smoke inhalation is a real danger. Stay as low as possible.

You can use the extinguisher bottom to break glass or door latches if you can't find another suitable object. Take care to aim the valve away from people, as this kind of action may damage the extinguisher.

Before going through any door, touch it with your fingertip. If it doesn't feel hot, touch it with your hand. If the door is hot, there is flame on the other side and opening the door is likely to cause the flame to burst forth to feed on the new oxygen on your side of the door. Look for a different route out. If there is no other route, you may need to open the door in a manner that keeps you out of the flame path. Once it's open, use the extinguisher to clear a way out.

Injured or disabled occupants

Assist others in evacuating as best you can. Use teamwork. For example, two people can carry a wheel-chaired person in the chair.

Do not stop to apply first-aid to injuries that aren't immediately life-threatening. Get the injured person out of the building. It is very likely EMTs are already on site or on the way.

Discussion leader duties for this session:

Obtain copies of the site fire evacuation map. If there is no such map, note where the lighted exit signs are.

What this Safety Talk covers:

What electrical workers need to know about evacuating during a fire or similar events.

Discussion notes :

