



034: Fire Prevention

Facts and figures

Workplace fires and explosions kill more than 200 workers each year, and injure another 5,000.

21.5% of industrial fires are from electrical causes.

Smoking causes 17% of industrial fires, while cutting and welding cause 5.5%.

Prevention steps

Use the proper circuit protection on equipment. Never bypass protection “just this once.” Temporary bypasses are easily forgotten and are too dangerous even when they are not forgotten.

Smoking is the number two cause of industrial fires. It is the number one cause of premature baldness and male impotence. It is a leading cause of cancers of the bones, bladder, testicles, bowels, brain, tongue, and lungs. It is a leading cause of heart attacks, emphysema, and other illnesses. Think about this when you decide to light up. If you light up in the workplace, you endanger everyone.

To reduce the fire danger from smoking, smoke only in approved areas and use the ashtrays provided. A carelessly flicked ash or tossed butt can easily roll under an ignitable and cause a fire. It is also easy to ignite a trail of fuel fumes, which can then ignite the fuel from a considerable distance.

Pick up all food wrappers, beverage containers, napkins, and other disposable items used at meals and breaks. Dispose of them properly to prevent attracting rodents and insects.

Clean up any oil, fibers, or dust on or around equipment and machinery.

If an oil spill is too big to clean up easily, report the spill to your foreman. If you must leave the area to report the oil, leave some kind of marker—an oil pig or other absorbent material is sufficient—so others can see the spill.

If fueling a portable generator or heater, use an approved fuel can and dispenser. Do not, for example, use a paper funnel when adding fuel. Try to do the refueling outside, away from ignition sources.

Store flammable and combustible materials in appropriate containers away from heat sources. For example, place touch-up paint in yellow lockers made for storing such materials.

Dispose of flammables—solvents, fuel, oil, and the like—according to established guidelines. Most likely, this will be in a container just for flammables.

Dispose of ignitables—paper, cloth, cardboard, and the like—according to established guidelines. Most likely, this will be in a regular trash container.

Never leave open flames unattended.

Before using spark-producing equipment, such as a welder, ensure the work area is free of flammables.

Before using flame-producing equipment, such as a cutting torch, ensure the work area is free of ignitables.

Arsonists are a reality. Support suspicious activity to your foreman and to security.

Discussion leader duties for this session:

Review your company’s fire prevention policy. Also, know the fire exits, escape routes, and fire extinguisher locations.

What this Safety Talk covers:

How to prevent fires on the job site.

Discussion notes :

