



Fire Safety is Everybody's Responsibility

Although the employer is responsible for carrying out the fire safety risk assessment and for the overall management of fire safety, it is still very much everybody's responsibility to reduce the risk of fire. Here are some of the simple, low cost ways that we can all make our workplaces safer with regard to fire.

- Ensure that sources of ignition are kept away from flammable materials. For example, take care when using portable heaters that they are away from waste bins, fabrics and other furnishings. Remember that all electrical devices get hot and make sure they are well ventilated.
- Always report electrical defects and do not use defective electrical equipment.
- Good housekeeping is essential. Waste paper and packaging make excellent fuel and should not be allowed to accumulate. Make sure such materials are removed at least daily and where activities have led to a large amount of such material accumulating, remove it straight away.
- Where bins are designed to have lids, keep those lids shut. This will reduce oxygen supply that might otherwise accelerate an accidental waste bin fire.
- When disposing of cardboard or storing it for recycling always store it flat and compacted as much as possible. This reduces the surface area exposed to oxygen and makes it harder to burn.
- Make sure that all materials are stored in a safe place, away from sources of heat and never in a main walkway, corridor or stairs. Remember that all walkways are emergency exit routes, not just the ones that are marked as such. Materials stored in a corridor may not look much of a hazard in bright light in normal circumstances, but remember that in an emergency many people may be rushing along the same route and lighting may be absent or severely reduced
- If you smoke, ensure that you do so in the appropriate designated areas. Make sure that you extinguish cigarettes in proper ash trays and never throw them in a general waste bin. Prior to smoking controls in the workplace, cigarettes were the single biggest cause of workplace fires.
- Make sure you understand the fire procedures in your workplace. Read the fire action notice and the instructions on your fire extinguishers now. Do not leave it until there is a fire to find out what you should do.
- Remember that fire extinguishers are to aid escape or to tackle very small fires only. Never try to put out a large indoor fire yourself. Simply ensure the alarm is raised and get out.
- Self closers on doors are there for a reason. They reduce the spread of fire and smoke. Keep them shut. If they have to be temporarily held back to allow the passage of a load through them, immediately shut them again as soon as the load has gone through.
- Make sure that do not obstruct fire exit doors either on the inside or outside. For example do not position desks or equipment where they make access to the fire exit more difficult and do not park vehicles next to the outside of fire exits.