



MAFES Dawg Tracks

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Safety Tips: Prevent Workplace Fires



“Safety is Everyone’s Responsibility” is the slogan that we try to imbed in all employees in our university system. Fire prevention in our various workplaces is all inclusive, as are all facets of safety. The number of people killed in workplace fires in the USA increased 103% from 2009 to 2010, jumping from 53 deaths in 2009 to 109 deaths in 2010. These facts were released by the USA Bureau of Labor Statistics. Back in 1995, there were 75,000 reported workplace fires, costing businesses over \$2.3 billion.

As mentioned above, safety being everyone’s responsibility, there are precautions that we can take to minimize or eliminate the cause and conditions for workplace fires. Our stations have experienced a few equipment fires over the past few years but nothing major in the way of buildings. We shall list and briefly discuss some ways that we can help eliminate the potential for a fire:

Practice Good Housekeeping-

Clutter contributes to fires by providing fuel, by preventing access to exits and emergency equipment. As a former executive refers to clutter as “organized clutter,” but it is still clutter, and in addition to being a potential for fire fuel, there is a solid potential for a slip, trip or fall hazard. We have several of these potential sites that have been strongly requested to correct.

Place Oily Rags in a Metal covered Container-

It is just as easy to have a can with a top in each maintenance shop, as some of our locations have, as to allowing them to pile up in a corner or other places.

Maintain Machinery and Equipment to Prevent Overheating and Sparks-

Regular inspections and maintenance of all our equipment and machinery will speak volumes in reducing the potential for fires on these items.

Do not Block Sprinklers - Keep Fire Extinguishers visible and accessible, as well as other Fire Fighting equipment - Keep Emergency exits clear and accessible.

Report Electrical Hazards-

As you walk through maintenance shops and other buildings, it is a good idea to be cognizant of the equipment in these areas. You just never know when you might see a potential hazard that has been overlooked by others. If you see potential electrical hazards, don’t attempt to correct the problem, but report it to your supervisor or the maintenance supervisor, assuming that there is a person in that slot.

Maintain Free Access to all Electric Panels- All electrical panels must have 36 inches of clear unobstructed access to each panel. Any type of equipment or materials either blocking or even partially blocking access to the electrical panels will slow down access to removing power in the affected area.

Store and Use Chemicals Safely-

Get familiar with the chemicals on hand by reading the label and reading the MSDS to determine the flammability and other fire hazards. Provide adequate ventilation when storing and using the chemicals.

Practice Extreme Caution to Prevent Ignition in Potentially Explosive Atmospheres-

Isolating fuels for yard appliances and mowers is a prime example of potential explosive atmospheres. It is a requirement that we isolate fuels and other flammables to avoid the potential for a fire or possibly an explosion. A flammable cabinet for the fuels would be an excellent addition and one that enhances protection for these types of materials.

Also extra care should be taken with using non-sparking tools where practical and controlling static electricity.

Learn how to use the Fire Extinguishers-

Remember the analogy for extinguisher use:

P – Pull the pin

A – Aim at the extinguisher at the base of the fire; not the flame

S – Squeeze the handle to release the agent

S – Swing the spray from side to side until the fire is extinguished. Keep a safe distance from the flame.

Make sure Emergency Phone Numbers are all posted in highly visible Locations

**WORKING SAFELY KEEPS
EVERYONE WORKING**



**SAFETY IS ALWAYS
IN SEASON**

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Excerpts: <http://compliance.safetysmart.com>

1/10/214