Fire Prevention Week
What you can do

October 3 to October 9 is National Fire Prevention Week. You can do a lot to help prevent fires in our workplace. As a refresher, remember that fire results from combining fuel, oxygen, and heat.

1. **Fuel**: Paper, wood, flammable substances such as gasoline

2. **Oxygen**: A gas present in the air

3. **Heat or Ignition Source**: Flame, electricity, friction, spark, chemical reaction

To prevent fires, keep fuel, oxygen, and heat from coming together. OSHA requires employers to have a fire prevention plan that covers workplace fire hazards and contains procedures and responsibilities for preventing fires.

Know and follow our fire prevention plan, which includes the following instructions. Practice good housekeeping to keep fuels away from heat and ignition sources.

- Dispose of waste promptly and properly.
- Keep work areas free of dust and lint.
- Keep combustible materials away from lights and machinery.

In addition, use and maintain electrical equipment properly. Electrical equipment causes the largest number of workplace fires.

- Replace cords and wires that are frayed or have worn insulation.
- Don’t overload circuits, motors, fuses, or outlets.
- Make sure you have good ground connections.
- Don’t run heating equipment or machinery overnight, if unattended.
- Keep bearings lubricated so they don’t run too hot.
- Keep machines and motors clear of dust and grease.

Here are other ways to avoid exposing fuels to heat sources:

- Smoke only in permitted areas. Put out cigarettes and matches carefully.
- Use space heaters only when necessary and in well-ventilated areas.
  - Refill space heaters only when they’re turned off and cool.
  - Place space heaters so they can’t fall over.
- Perform welding and cutting operations only in separate, fire-resistant areas.

Also prevent fires that result from chemical reactions by reading labels and material safety data sheets (MSDSs) so you don’t use or store incompatible substances together. See sidebar for more fire prevention precautions.

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FLAMMABLES AND FIRES
Flammable substances are so named because they can spread and catch fire easily. So you need to identify and take precautions with flammable substances. Here’s how:

- Check labels and MSDSs to identify flammable substances.
- Follow handling and storage precautions to prevent spills and vapor releases.
- Clean up flammable spills and leaks immediately.
- Remove clothing that has absorbed flammable liquids immediately.
- Substitute nonflammable materials in tasks when possible.
- Keep flammable liquids in approved containers that are closed when not in use.
- Ground containers during liquid transfer so you don’t create static electricity.
- Use flammable liquids only in well-ventilated areas away from heat and fire.
- Do not place near heat or cut a container that previously contained a flammable liquid, unless it’s been tested and approved for such use.

In addition, handle highly flammable oxygen cylinders carefully. For example, don’t handle them with oily hands or gloves. And don’t store near combustible materials.

Finally, despite all your precautions, in case a fire does occur, keep routes clear for firefighting and fire evacuation. For example, don’t block exits, fire alarms, aisles, or sprinklers.
Trick or Treat?

Make sure Halloween is a treat

October is Halloween Safety Month. Take the same precautions for walking around the neighborhood at night that you follow even when it’s not Halloween.

➔ Carry a flashlight with a strong beam and good batteries.
➔ Ensure young kids are accompanied by adults or responsible older children.
➔ Ensure older kids travel in groups.
➔ Follow the rules for crossing streets.
➔ Be careful if you need to walk on lawns, which may get slippery with evening dew as the night comes on.

Halloween traditions have certain unique safety protocols. Namely:

➔ Approach houses only if they have outside lights on.
➔ Use driveways and sidewalks; don’t walk on people’s lawns, if possible.
➔ Don’t eat treats while walking; wait until you get home.
➔ Don’t run from house to house; it’s not a race and running in a costume at dusk on unfamiliar terrain can cause slips, trips, and falls.

Finally, be careful with the treats. Take these precautions:

➔ Check all treats before letting kids of any age have them.
➔ Throw out items with torn wrappers.
➔ Discard items that may be outdated.
➔ Be careful giving young kids hard candy or treats that could make them choke.
➔ Don’t let kids—or you—gorge! Portion out treats over the next week or so.

Fire Prevention Quiz

Test your knowledge

Circle T for True or F for False.

1. Fire results from combining fuel, oxygen, and heat or an ignition source. T  F

2. Examples of fuel are:
   a. Paper, wood, flammable liquids  b. Electricity  c. Chemical reaction

3. To find out if a substance is flammable, you check:
   a. Where it’s stored  b. What it’s used for  c. Its label and MSDS

4. Flammable liquids should be stored in:
   a. Containers painted fire engine red  b. Approved containers  c. Containers with spouts

5. The most common source of workplace fires is:
   a. Flammable liquids  b. Chemicals  c. Electricity

6. If a cord or wire has frayed or worn insulation:
   a. Replace it.  b. Not notice it.  c. Ignore it.

7. One way to prevent machine bearings from running too hot is to keep them lubricated. T  F

8. Smoking only in permitted areas is a fire prevention precaution. T  F

ANSWERS