

# Fire Prevention

## Fire Prevention and Safety

Employers should train workers about fire hazards in the workplace and about what to do in a fire emergency. If you want your workers to evacuate, you should train them on evacuation procedures. If you expect your workers to use firefighting equipment, you should provide the appropriate equipment and train workers to use it safely.

### What actions should employers take to help ensure safe evacuations of buildings?

Every workplace must have enough exits suitably located to enable everyone to get out of the facility quickly. Considerations include the type of structure, the number of persons exposed, the fire protection available, the type of industry involved, and the height and type of construction of the building or structure. In addition, exit doors must not be blocked or locked when employees are inside. Delayed opening of exit doors, however, is permitted when an approved alarm system is integrated into the exit door design. Exit routes from buildings must be free of obstructions and properly marked with exit signs.

### Do employers have to provide portable fire extinguishers?

No. But if you do, you must establish an educational program to familiarize your workers with the general principles of fire extinguisher use. If you expect your workers to use portable fire extinguishers, you must provide hands-on training in using this equipment.

### All fire prevention plans must:

- Be available for employee review.
- Include housekeeping procedures for storage and cleanup of flammable materials and flammable waste.

- Address handling and packaging of flammable waste. (Recycling of flammable waste such as paper is encouraged.)

### What are the rules for fixed extinguishing systems?

Fixed extinguishing systems throughout the workplace are among the most reliable fire fighting tools. These systems detect fires, sound an alarm, and apply water or another extinguishing agent to the fire. To meet OSHA standards, employers who have fixed extinguishing systems must:

- Substitute (temporarily) a fire watch of trained employees to respond to fire emergencies when a fire suppression system is out of service.
- Ensure that the fire watch is included in the fire prevention plan and the emergency action plan.

### How to Contact OSHA

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. For more information, visit [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov) or call OSHA at 1-800-321-OSHA (6742), TTY 1-877-889-5627.

[Osha.gov](http://Osha.gov)