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YOUR FRONT-LINE MANAGER SAFETY RESOURCE SINCE 1929

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Delegation - Seven Questions to Ask

Delegation takes trust. Do *you* have enough to be able to delegate tasks?

Here are seven questions you can ask yourself.

1. Is the worker matched to the task? Try to match jobs to skills. Assign jobs based on talent not just those who have time.
2. Do you give your workers the training and information to do the job? If so, trust them to do it.
3. Does the worker know what to do if problems arise? Include what to do if problems arise instruction in safe work practices and use of the required personal protective equipment for the task.
4. Are you checking up? Let the worker know how often and how their work will be checked. Communicate what level of performance is acceptable and what rate of improvement is required as they become more proficient. Set up deadlines and reporting dates.
5. Does the worker understand the job? Explain the job. Be very clear on what is expected. Once you have explained it, let the person accomplish it. As long as the job is being done safely, correctly and on time, give the worker some leeway on how they actually do the task. They might even come up with a better way of doing it.
6. Are you there if you're needed? Keep the lines of communication open. Give help and suggestions when needed.
7. Was the task completed? Accepting less than finished work defeats the purpose of delegating.

Don't let your own perfectionism get in the way of delegating work.

Three Ways to Battle Safety Complacency

Complacency can affect all levels of a company. On the floor, workers may become overly comfortable in their positions. This can lead to inattention and to injuries. Management can also become complacent, especially if too much emphasis is placed on the company safety record. As a supervisor, it's easy to become complacent. We are often bombarded with high priority tasks, so we expect our workers to perform as they have been trained. To counter the effects of complacency, there are three things a front line supervisor can do.

Observe Behaviors It is extremely important for supervisors to monitor their workforce for signs of complacency. Supervisors know their staff better than anyone and should be able to identify when workers become too comfortable or overconfident.

Supplement Group Training With Individual Assistance A supervisor's job is to ensure that the group training is reflected in individual on-the-job situations. You must make the training immediately relevant to the workers. Any time a worker is found to be performing a task contrary to the safety training, the supervisor must address it on the spot. Individual work instructions are very effective when delivered immediately in response to an unsafe work practice.

Communicate Upwards Supervisors are accustomed to receiving instruction from higher level management and disseminating the information among the workers. However, communicating safety needs from workers to managers is a great way to fight complacency as well. Notifying management of unsafe conditions keeps everyone focused on safety. Just remember to follow up with both the management and the worker(s) involved. Workers want to know that their supervisors truly are concerned with their individual well-being, and managers are people, too; they may forget or get sidetracked.

Anyone can become complacent at work. Front line supervisors are in an excellent position to provide the individual attention needed to keep workers and management focused on workplace safety, while working together to achieve other profitable company objectives.

Delegate!

For most safety pros, the key to success is producing results – tangible evidence that employee safety and health is being improved to the benefit of the company.

How can a safety department, especially a small or one-person staff, produce results when there are so many regulations to comply with, and day-to-day routine tasks to handle? The answer is summed up in just on word: delegation.

Delegation is getting things done through other people. You use this technique when you assign problem-solving and decision-making authority to an assistant, subordinate, other employees or a group.

Delegating is allowing others to help you succeed. Really, everyone wins. The safety manger is free to manage, and employees handling delegated assignments develop new skills.

Boost Benefits

Much more can be accomplished with assistance from others.

Consider these factors:

- With all the regulations to contend with and the dozens of safety-related and miscellaneous projects that keep coming out of the woodwork, it's impossible to give every item on your agenda your best effort. To think you can is naïve, and to attempt to do so invites worry, ineffectiveness and burnout.
- Stress is reduced when you shift and share responsibilities. Everyone could use less stress.
- A person who can delegate effectively is an extremely valuable asset to an organization. It is a sign of leadership and self-confidence. Delegation is the mark of a successful manager, and mastery of this skill will help you ascend to new levels of responsibility within your organization.
- Delegation is one of the most efficient and productive tools available to teach subordinates. They learn your responsibilities by performing them. As you delegate more and more tasks, the self-esteem and confidence of your people will increase. This is how you groom future managers.

Overcome Objections

In light of these advantages, why do so few managers delegate?

Some of the more common objections (and answers to them) are:

- **My people might botch it up**. So how else are they going to learn? Every good leader expects people to make mistakes. With planning and foresight, you can ensure that any mistakes made will not bring and end to the world.
- **It takes too much time to explain everything.** I can do it just as fast myself. Sure, but can you do everything yourself?
- **People will think I'm lazy.** Wrong! People will consider you a 'smart' manager of people, time and resources.
- **If I delegate a project, I won't have the answers to questions from my superior.** Touch base periodically with subordinates to be brought up to date on progress.
- **Delegation is a sign of weakness.** Delegation is a sign of trust and self-confidence. You will be viewed as a leader.
- **It won't be done exactly the way I want.** So? What difference does it make as long as the project is finished and meets the established standards? Plus, if the people who ultimately have to live with the final result are involved in the completion of the project, you can bet they will do it the best way.

Don't think you have enough trust to delegate? Read the article on the cover ***Seven Questions to Ask Yourself.***

Sales: 1-800-667-9300 sales@bongarde.com **www.SafeSupervisor.com** Email: editorial@bongarde.com

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Fatality File

Sanitation Plant Fire Kills Two Workers

A crew leadman and a foreman were fatally burned when their oxygen-saturated clothing caught fire.

A sanitation district had hired a contractor to install a gate valve in a hydraulic channel. The limited-access channel was pumped out before the work, except for a few inches of sludge. The sewage liquor, previously injected with 60 percent oxygen, was still releasing oxygen into the air.

The contractor's leadman was chipping the side of the concrete channel. His air hammer caused a spark, igniting his clothing. The foreman, who had been working near oxygen vent pipes, jumped into the channel and was also engulfed in flames.

Co-workers saw the two running through the channel and yelled at them to roll on the ground. A third worker leaned over the channel and his shirt caught fire.

Two died and the third survived.

When oxygen-enriched clothing contacts a spark, fire is severe, hot and fast. Supervisors should know the hazards of any confined space and inform contractors. There should be a written program for confined space testing, entry and rescue, strict procedures, including use of the correct respiratory protection.

Picture This

Cookies and Fire Extinguisher Share Aisle 1

Shelf space for merchandise must be a rare commodity in this store, given this photograph of a fire extinguisher peeking out from behind these shelves. Better hope there's not a fire or precious time could be lost trying to free this fire extinguisher from its awkward position. Amazingly, a tag on the fire extinguisher indicates that it passed a recent inspection. How could that be? *(Naval Safety Center)*

Be a Better Supervisor - Know the Types of Fire in Your Workplace

The Risks

Fires can erupt in any workplace - but did you know that water will not put them all out? That may seem odd right? Many seem to think that because the majority of controlled fires in our lives, campfires for example, are extinguished with water, we know all we need to about fire safety. The truth is though, that the majority of the types of fires are actually *worsened* by throwing water on them.

Be A Better Supervisor

As a supervisor, it is important that you understand different types of fires and how to deal with them. Only when you understand each type, will you be able to pass on the information to your employees and effectively prevent costs in property damage, increased worker's compensation rates, decrease in productivity and most importantly injury or death.

There are five different classes of fires. Each one lists what can cause the fire, what type of fire extinguisher can put it out and any other notable details.

Class A

This fire class is the only one that water can put out. Class A fires are caused by ordinary combustible materials, anything that leaves ash when it burns. Sources of these fires include wood, paper, cloth, trash, and many plastics. In addition to water, Class A fires can also be put out by Class A fire extinguishers. You can determine the type of fire extinguisher that you have by looking for a shape with a letter within it. A triangle with an A inside of it, often green, identifies a Class A extinguisher.

Class B

Class B type of fires are caused by flammable liquids or gases. An example of a source is fuels such as gasoline or butane. Class B fires should never have water used on them as water will only spread the liquid or gas which will also spread the fire from its origin. Instead, these fires are best extinguished by smothering them, which depletes the oxygen supply, or with use of a Class B extinguisher. A square with a B inside of it, often red, identifies these extinguishers.

Class C

This type of fire happens because of a live electrical source. Using water on these fires can result in shocks or electrocution, so **do not use water**. Instead, non-conductive agents (like carbon dioxide) or Class C extinguishers are the most effective way to extinguish these fires. Look for a circle with a C in it, often blue, to identify these extinguishers.

Class D

Class D fires are caused by combustible metals such as magnesium or titanium. These fires are extremely hot and require an extinguisher that does not react with the burning metal, which can be identified by a star with a D, often yellow. Water is particularly dangerous to use with these fires because of how these metals react with water. Often, the fire will become toxic or explosive once water is introduced to them.

Class K

Think K for kitchen on this one. Class K fires are caused by cooking oils, grease, or animal fat. Similar to Class B fires, using water on Class K fires will spread the source around, along with the fire. A wet chemical extinguisher, which is identified with a black hexagon with a K inside of it.

Inspection & Maintenance of Portable Fire Extinguishers

You must visually inspect portable extinguishers each month. All portable fire extinguishers must also undergo an annual maintenance check. Stored pressure extinguishers don't require an internal examination.

It's important to keep inspection and maintenance records. You need to record the annual maintenance date and keep the record for one year after the last entry or the life of the shell, whichever is less, and make the record available to OSHA / OHS officials if they ask for it.

You must also ensure that alternate equivalent protection fire extinguishing protection is in place any time you remove portable fire extinguishers from service for maintenance or recharging.

Training

You must have an educational program to familiarize employees with the general principles of fire extinguisher use and the hazards involved with incipient stage fire fighting.

You must also provide fire extinguisher education to employees when they're first hired; and at least every year after that.

Understand the potential fire hazards in your workplace and check your jurisdictions requirements for portable fire extinguishers to ensure you are ready if the need to use one arises.

Fatality File

Roofer Falls to His Death

A 22-year-old roofer fell approximately 22 feet (6.7 meters) off the edge of a roof onto concrete and died.

The worker leaned over the side of the roof to nail a piece of felt that was flapping. He placed his hand onto the felt, which had no support underneath, then fell over the roof. He was wearing a fall restraint harness and was dragging the ropes behind him. However, he was not connected to the anchorage point. His brother witnessed the fall and end of the roofer's short life.

If you are performing jobs that require the use of fall arrest or restraint, under what situations have you allowed the protection not to be used? Is it when "the job will only take a minute," or when "it has been done before without the belts and we didn't fall then?"

Neither answer is an excuse for not using the safety equipment. Always use fall protection and ensure it is connected to an anchorage point, otherwise it is useless.

Like this roofer, all employees need to be taught when and how to properly use safety equipment. Safety equipment that isn't used properly is like wearing no safety equipment at all.

Picture This

Slipping Up on Safety

Someone has definitely slipped up on safety, judging by the conditions evident in this photograph. Not only is the concrete floor wet, but the walkway is blocked by equipment, forcing workers to walk directly across the wet floor. And a face plant onto the sharp edge of the cart shown at right could only make matters worse.

When prioritizing your safety efforts, it's easy to put addressing hazards that could result in, say, amputations or fatalities at the top of the list and spend little to no time on slip, trip and fall hazards. After all, if a worker slips on a wet floor or trips on a cord, what's the worst that's likely to happen?

The problem with giving slip, trip and fall hazards short shrift is that even non-life threatening injuries such as broken bones and torn ligaments can have a profound impact on a worker's life and keep him out of the workplace for significant periods of time.

9 Tips for Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls in Your Workplace

1. Implement good basic housekeeping practices. For example, keep the work environment clean, with floors and access routes clear of obstacles.
2. Ensure adequate lighting levels , positioning lights to ensure all floor areas are evenly lit and all potential hazards, obstructions and spills can be clearly seen.
3. Regularly inspect the workplace for these hazards. For example, floors should be checked for damage and maintenance carried out when necessary to address holes, cracks and loose carpets and mats.
4. Ensure that floor surfaces are suitable for the work carried out, such as resistant to oil and chemicals used in production processes. And in areas where water is used, there should be drains to prevent puddles from forming.
5. Make sure stairways have handrails, slip-resistant covers on steps, high visibility and non-slip markings on the front edges of steps, and good lighting.
6. Clean up spills immediately using an appropriate cleaning method. Use warning signs where the floor is wet and arrange alternative routes.
7. When possible, remove any obstructions that could cause workers to trip or fall. If that's not possible, then use appropriate barriers and warning notices.
8. Practice good cord management. For example, place equipment so power cords don't cross pedestrian routes. And securely fix cords to surfaces.
9. Require workers to wear suitable footwear , taking into account of the type of job, floor surface, typical floor conditions and the slip-resistant properties of the soles.

Be A Better Supervisor - Delivering a Workspace Free of Slips, Trips, and Falls

The Risk

Slips, trips, and falls can happen in any workplace. Throughout your lifetime, you've likely seen someone slip, trip, or fall or even done so yourself. In fact, it's probably happened so often you have lost track.

What you may not know, is that slips, trips, and falls are the leading cause of employees missing work, according to the National Floor Safety Institute. As well, they are the leading cause of worker's compensation claims and injuries for employees 55 and older.

Slips, trips, and falls can cause decreased productivity, increased insurance costs, and time and dollar costs associated with replacing a good employee.

Be A Better Supervisor

As a supervisor, it is your responsibility to understand and reduce the hazards which cause slips, trips, and falls in the workplace. It will save you stress and possibly save others' lives.

Here are some tips on identifying potential slip, trip and fall hazards at your workplace.

Unsafe Flooring and Surfaces

One thing to look for when investigating unsafe conditions is unsafe flooring. Certain materials like marble, concrete, and ceramic can be especially slippery when wet. Highly polished floors, recently cleaned floors, and floors that accumulate debris or liquids are all hazards as well. Communication and signs like wet floor signs, can let everyone across the workplace know about these slippery workplaces to watch out for.

Surfaces can also cause trips and falls when there is damage or obstructions along pathways.

Common examples of this would be

- cords,
- hoses,
- missing or damaged floor tiles and bricks,
- improper floor hole coverage, or
- open drawers.

The best way to reduce these hazards is to implement policies that prohibit careless actions like allowing these hazards at the workplace. It may also help to hold regular talks about housekeeping or putting up posters to remind employees about their responsibility.

Unsafe Stairs and Railings

There are building codes dictating the height and depth of individual steps. There are also regulations on handrails for staircases. (*Check your jurisdiction to find out the building codes in your area.*)

These codes are meant to ensure the safety of everyone when using stairs, but there are instances in which they fail. Buildings that aren't up to code, have damaged steps or handrails, have blocked or cluttered steps, have slippery stairs, or have poorly lit stairwells all exponentially increase the risk of slips, trips, and falls.

As a supervisor, you can reduce these risks by regularly checking stairwells and by communicating these hazards to employees. It is crucial that employees feel like they can report these hazards to you, so that both you and them can be safe. After knowing about these conditions, actions like simple housekeeping can help eliminate them from the worksite.

Poor Lighting

Not being able to see where you are going is an obvious slip, trip, and fall hazard.

Poor lighting can happen when:

- there is not enough natural lighting or is restricted natural lighting (curtains are being used);
- there is insufficient artificial lighting installed;
- lightbulbs are too low wattage to provide sufficient lighting; or
- burnt out bulbs are not replaced.

Insufficient lighting hides slip, trip and fall hazards; it can shade slippery surfaces, cover uneven flooring, or hide steps. On the flip side, too much lighting can blind people and prevent them from seeing hazards in their path.

Again, strong communication is important in reducing these hazards. It is crucial that employees report hazards to you so that you can take the appropriate actions to correct them.

You can also regularly check all parts of the workplace to ensure that it provides a safe environment for employees.

Remember! Slips, trips and falls, although more common that we'd like to admit, can be prevented with proper training and good safety habits.

Workplan - Planning to Reduce Slips, Trips, and Falls

Slip, trips, and falls can be costly for businesses in more ways then just one. Injuries can lead to temporary or permanent disability for employees, resulting in time off work, decreased productivity, increased insurance costs, and the costs of replacing an experienced employee.

Falls on the same level and falls to a lower level are the second and third leading causes of disabling work-relating injuries (overexertion being the first), according to a Workplace Safety Index study. In the United States alone, it is estimated that these two causes cost businesses $10.6 billion and $5.5 billion respectively. That results in over $310 million lost each week to something that is preventable! Luckily, by taking appropriate steps, you can reduce the likelihood of slips, trips, and falls in your workplace.

Step 1: Identify Hazards

There are two types of hazards that cause slips, trips, and falls: unsafe conditions and unsafe acts. It is important to check the workplace for both types of hazards.

Unsafe Conditions

Here, you are looking for poorly lit areas, unsafe stairwells and railings, unsafe flooring and surfaces, and any other environmental factor that makes it easy for employees to lose their balance. To see more about these unsafe conditions, refer to our Be a Better Supervisor section on this topic.

Unsafe Acts

Unsafe acts are habits employees have that increase their risk of slipping, tripping, or falling. It's almost impossible to watch your employees all at the same time so you need be aware of certain behaviors to watch out for like skipping steps, running up or down stairs, not looking where they are going, or not using handrails.

Obviously, some people can get through their day without an injury, but overall, rushing, running, and taking shortcuts increases their danger.

Step 2: Fixing Conditions

After you know the slip, trip, and fall hazards from unsafe conditions, there are a few actions you can take to improve things:

1. Repair the hazard

If there is damage to necessary parts of the workplace environment, fix them if you can. This could be replacing burnt bulbs, fixing loose tile, replacing a leaking pipe, or installing a new handrail.

2. Changing processes

Sometimes the hazard isn't because of damage but perhaps the result of a process. *For example, a machine process may release steam onto the floor, making the floor more slippery.* In these cases, it may be worthwhile to consider ways to reduce the by-product. This could mean creating a policy preventing work from being done in ways that put extension cords along walkways, for example. The idea is to change how work is done to maintain a safe environment.

3. Consider PPE or quarantine

If it isn't possible to fix the hazard or reduce it, it's time to consider either sectioning off the area or supplying personal protective equipment (PPE). In areas that are hazardous but still need to be worked in, you need to limit the area to well-equipped employees.

Place barriers preventing accidental entry and supply employees with equipment, like non-slip boots or harnesses, to reduce the likelihood of slips, trips, and falls.

Step 3: Changing Behavior

It can be hard to change people, that much should be evident in everyone's lives. Nonetheless, you don't want your employees to sustain debilitating injuries, so you want to get them to change their risky behavior. The best thing you can do is to train them on slips, trips, and falls and regularly remind them of those dangers in the workplace. By training them, they can understand the hazards and have more reason to correct their actions. Don't forget to reinforce the training by regularly reminding them about these dangers. Reminding them can come in the forms of placing posters throughout the worksite or holding regular safety talks.

The best way to prevent slip, trip, and fall accidents is through effective safety training, combined with safe work practices.

Identifying Hazards and Preventing Slips, Trips, and Falls Checklist

Slips, trips, and falls are possible in any workplace because of how common the hazards are. Everything from a floor opening to an uplift in the carpet, someone could slip, trip, or fall in your workplace and sustain an injury that requires they take time off work and seek worker's compensation. Sometimes, the injury can be so debilitating that the victim has a decreased quality of life or dies. Are you doing the most you can to reduce these hazards in your workplace? Use these questions to address common risks and keep track of what has been fixed.

QUESTION	Has it been fixed?	Why not?	Some options
Are there sources of regular leaks (e.g. broken pipes, machines, hoses, etc.)?			Obviously, the best solution is to fix or repair, but you can also set up a pan or dish to contain the leaking fluid and regularly empty it.
Are all working surfaces level and smooth to walk on (i.e. is there gravel, unfinished flooring, broken tile, ripped carpet, etc.)?			Try to fix any cracks, bumps, holes, or dents in flooring. If that isn't possible, supply mats or planks that make surfaces easier to walk on.
Do working surfaces get slippery or wet?			Consider redirecting foot traffic or moving processes to reduce this problem, otherwise supply non-slip mats or grated flooring.
Does debris obstruct pathways often (e.g. cords, rope, boxes, tools, materials, etc.)?			Have a talk with everyone to maintain housekeeping. In the case of electrical cords, install outlets or move processes so that cords don't have to go across pathways.
Are stairs up to code?			One of the most common hazards are stairs. If stairs in your workplace aren't uniform height and depth, or are outside regulations, report them or replace them.
Are any lighting fixtures burnt out or not working?			Replace bulbs if you can. If you can't then provide additional sources of light such as new windows or lamps.
Are there blind corners in pathways?			To prevent people from running into each other, consider installing convex mirrors in hallway corners. This will allow people to see who's coming and give the workplace more security.
Are there floor openings?			If there are floor openings in your workplace, you have a few ways to protect people: you can install guardrails, supply fall protection, cover the opening and mark it, or restrict access to the area.
Are there environmental factors (e.g. ice on sidewalk, rain on cement, fog, etc.)?			You can't stop environmental factors, but you can protect against them. Around the workplace, salt walkways for snow and provide overhead protection for rain and snow. For fog, install lighting and mark tripping hazards in bright colors.
Are humans to blame (i.e. are employees clumsy or distracted)?			If people are the issue, all that you can do is holding safety talks and identify the hazards in the workplace so that they can protect themselves.

Workplan - Planning for Reducing and Preventing Fires

It's no secret that fires can be devastating. From 2014 to 2016, the United States Fire Administration estimated that there were 100,300 nonresidential building fires in each year in the United States, amounting to over 300,000 fires and around $7.2 billion in property losses. Cooking was the leading cause, around 30% of them, and in 59% of the buildings, the fire spread beyond the room it started in. In Canada, from 2012 to 2016 the number of total calls reported – fire and non fire calls has increased from 462,542 incidents reported in 2012 to 494,811 in 2016.

It is unrealistic for any organization to assume that there is no potential for a fire to occur in their workplace. Instead, being proactive and taking the appropriate actions to prevent possible fires will not only save lives, but also your place of work.

Fire safety is not something to ignore, here are three steps you can take:

Step 1: Reducing Firestarters

The first step in fire prevention is identifying and reducing firestarters. Depending on the industry, there are various potential causes for fires, and it is up to you to investigate the workplace. Some common sources include:

- combustible dusts like sawdust or metal shavings
- oily rags
- exposed fuel
- certain cleaning products
- various cooking products
- electrical sources
- combustible metals
- organic materials like wood, or any number of combustible materials.

Once these sources are identified, the next step is working to reduce their presence in the workplace if possible.

Depending on the hazard, this can be done in various ways. Common means include:

- building a ventilation for combustible dusts
- designated disposal areas with coverings for oily rags
- locking up the storage of flammable liquids; or
- installing GFCI outlets around water sources.

Whatever the hazard, it is important to reduce or eliminate its presence in the workplace once it has been identified.

Step 2: Installing Fire Prevention

The next step after reducing firestarters is to install protection against fires. This is to help eliminate fires in case that they have started, or the means to prevent fires from spreading. Fire codes call for buildings to have sprinkler systems and smoke alarms, but it is up to you to make sure that these tools are well maintained. It is important to replace smoke alarm batteries when needed and to ensure sprinklers cover every area that they need to, especially when you make changes to a building, such as making a new kitchen area.

To prevent a fire from spreading, in particularly high-risk areas, it may be worthwhile to replace wooden doors with fire-proof ones. These doors can prevent or slow a fire from spreading, allowing for authorities to show up and reducing property damage.

It is necessary to have fire extinguishers readily available in the workplace. Fires have different classes which different fire extinguishers are needed for. Because of this, you must assess the potential fire risks in your workplace to ensure you have the right fire extinguisher for they type of fire. *For example a fire extinguisher meant for kitchens will likely not put out a fire caused by combustible metals like magnesium.*

Step 3: Train Employees

Train employees on the fire hazards at your workplace. This step is just as important as the first two, but it must be done in addition to the first two steps simply because of human error. In other words, this method is less reliable on it's own than the previous two.

Training employees is fundamental in fire prevention. Employees need to know the potential fire hazards, even the obvious ones, so that they can watch for signs of a potential fire hazard. As well, employees should be trained on the different types of fires that can erupt in a workplace, so they know how to put each type out. And remember - the majority of fires become worse when water is thrown on them so it is important that employees understand when they should and should not use water. *See the fire extinguisher basics inforgraphic on page 3 for the different fire classes.*

Employees should also be trained on how to react to a fire, they need to know when and how to evacuate. There may be nothing worse than getting everyone out of a building on fire and realizing someone is trapped because they didn't know the exit route.

Checklist: Fire Prevention

Fires can occur from a variety of sources in the workplace. Within minutes, a building can be engulfed on the inside, destroying resources and possibly taking lives. Fire prevention is a rational and common desire, but sometimes the potential for fires in plain sight. Utilize this checklist to find and eliminate common fire sources in your workplace.

Inspection Date: _____

Inspected By: _____

Topic	Yes	No	Comments
Cords, connections and other electrical equipment are in good condition, free of defects and damage			
Wiring is adequate to handle the electrical load			
Flammable liquids, such as solvents, are stored in the proper containers in well ventilated areas away from sources of ignition			
Whenever possible, non-flammable substitutes are used			
Materials which can burn, such as paper or fabric, are kept away from sources of ignition – i.e. ovens, heaters			
Combustible materials are kept away from exit routes, stairways and halls			
Compressed gas cylinders are a safe distance from ignition sources			
Surfaces, such as ceilings, and equipment, such as dryers, are free of lint and dust			
Smoking is confined to designated areas and deep no-tip ashtrays are used			
Fire extinguishers and other fire fighting equipment are serviced and maintained regularly			
Workers are trained to locate and use fire extinguishers			
Fire drills are held regularly			
Exit routes are clearly marked			
Sprinklers and other emergency devices are kept free of obstructions			

By the Numbers

Fire Safety Statistics

Fire Prevention Week has been recognized every October since 1922 (1923 in Canada) in memory of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, which killed more than 250 people, left 10,000 homeless and destroyed some 17,400 structures. To help you with preventing fires, here are seven statistics relating to fires in the workplace and home:

1. Chemicals, electricity, combustible materials, flammable liquids, smoking, compressed gases and poor housekeeping are **seven** major contributors to workplace fires.
2. **Four** things your employees need to know about fire safety are: the location of two emergency exits closest to their work areas; the location of the nearest fire alarm pull station and how to use it; the emergency number to call (911 or otherwise) in case of a workplace fire; and what they need to do if a workplace fire breaks out.
3. About **200** workers die in workplace fires each year across the US. *(OSHA)*
4. Fires kill about **eight** people in Canada each week. *(Fire Prevention Canada)*
5. **Two out of five** home fires start in the kitchen. *(National Fire Protection Association)*
6. About **100** firefighters die in the line of duty each year in the US. *(Louisiana Office of Emergency Preparedness)*
7. Coffee makers, space heaters and hotplates left on while no one is in the office are **three** significant contributors to workplace fires. *(Fire Prevention Canada)*

Focus On: Training Workers to Avoid Electrical Dangers

Electrocution is a leading cause of occupational deaths, according to OSHA. Electric shock also causes disabling injuries such as burns, respiratory problems, brain, bone and muscle damage and effects on the heart and other internal organs, nervous system changes.

Here's what your workers need to know to safely work with two key electrical hazards: high voltage and arc flash.

The Dangers of Electric Shock

Anything over 500 volts is considered high voltage. Contact with power lines or energy sources in this range can lead to death or severe injury. Even coming too close to high energy sources can be harmful, since the electric arc produced by these sources can jump anywhere from a few inches to several feet, depending on the voltage level involved.

Keep in mind that the human body is a great conductor of electricity. As electricity travels through your body, literally seeking ground, it leaves a path of harm and destruction all along the path it takes inside of you.

The injuries caused by high voltage include severe burns, not only on the surface of your skin, but deep in internal organs, as well. Besides burns, one of the biggest hazards associated with electric shock injury is sudden death due to heart attack. Electric shock can cause your muscles to contract irregularly. This includes irregular contraction of the most important muscle in your body, your heart. In addition, electric shock can damage muscles, causing release of kidney damaging proteins into the blood.

Precautions Workers Should Take to Avoid Shock

Some of the precautions you need to take if you work near high voltage lines include keeping a safe distance away from the lines. This can range from 6 to 20 feet away, depending on the strength of the line voltage. Equipment, like cranes, also needs to be kept far away from high voltage lines. The distance to keep equipment away ranges from 10 feet to 42 feet, again depending on the strength of electrical source.

Of course, if you are working in the vicinity of a high voltage line, you should make sure that it has been de-energized before you begin your project. You should also avoid working above or over high voltage lines, not only because this increases the possibility of contact, but also because tools or equipment may fall and hit the line and either damage it or lead to arcing.

Other things you can do to protect yourself include wearing rubber-soled shoes and eye protection, and removing all of your jewelry. You should also never work alone with or near high voltage electricity.

The Dangers of Arc Flash

Arc flash can also cause traumatic injuries and death. If you'll be working on equipment that cannot be de-energized before performing the work, it's essential that you have some knowledge about arc flash and how to protect yourself.

Arc flash can be described as a short circuit through air, in which large amounts of light and heat energy are released explosively from electrical equipment. These waves of energy can damage eyesight and hearing, and the superheated ball of gas accompanying the flash can cause burns over your entire body or in your lungs. In addition, pieces of loose or damaged equipment or tools can end up flying through the air.

The amount of heat produced by an arcing event in low and medium energy equipment (480V) can be very large. The amount of heat a worker is exposed to during an arc flash depends how much energy passes through the system, how long the worker is exposed to the energy and the distance that the worker is from where the arc flash is produced.

Precautions Workers Should Take to Avoid Arc Flash

Generally, when workers need to perform maintenance or repair work on electrical equipment, that equipment should be de-energized and lockout/tagout procedures followed to protect workers from exposure to electrical hazards.

However, there are situations where the electrical equipment must remain energized during work. If that's the case, then NFPA 70E (the National Fire Protection Association Standard for Electrical Safety in the Workplace) specifies the practices that need to be followed to protect workers from the hazards of the electrical energy.

These include:

- Get training so you can recognize energized equipment and how to work safely with it;
- Know that the employer is required to conduct an arc flash analysis before such work is done. The analysis decides what level the electrical hazard is, so a flash protection boundary can be established. It also helps you select proper personal protective clothing and equipment;
- While working on it, keep an "Arc Flash Hazard" label placed on energized equipment.

Conclusion

Arc flash is dangerous. The explosions that occur can lead to traumatic injuries, as well as to severe burns that affect the entire body and the lungs. Death from these injuries is a real possibility.

Safety Training – Tips for Presenting Safety Talks

Safety Talks are typically written to provide an easy-to-understand overview of safety basics. Ideally, you should use Safety Talks as the basis of a meeting in which you contribute your own actual experience and knowledge.

Here are some ideas for running your meeting including how to prepare and conduct it.

PREPARING FOR THE MEETING

You can keep up-to-date on safety issues by continuing to read safety publications and talking to safety experts.

Visual aids including videotapes can greatly enhance a talk. Make sure you preview any videotape or slides which you intend to use, and check to see if the videotape player or projector is working. Gather up other items for demonstrations such as related equipment, tools or hazardous materials labels, etc.

You should also get other people involved by asking them to speak or lead a meeting once in awhile. You could also invite a professional or an experienced worker from outside of your group to talk.

Arrange for workers to demonstrate safe work techniques and the use of equipment being discussed. Ask ahead of time if you may call on certain workers to tell about related safety incidents. (Be careful not to point the finger or embarrass somebody who might have been involved.)

Be sure everyone knows about the meeting in advance and what the topic of discussion will be. This gives them a chance to think of concerns and comments regarding the issues that will be discussed.

Make notes on your Supervisor's Copy. List any props you intend to use, anyone you plan to call on to speak, and any incidents you would like to relate.

Keep a record of the people who have attended the Safety Talks sessions by having them sign your Supervisor's Copy. Keep these forms on file for future reference.

Are you worried about pre-talk jitters? Perhaps the idea of speaking in front of your fellow workers puts your stomach in a knot. You aren't alone if you feel this way. Many famous speakers and performers confess to stage fright. The trick is to make this stress work FOR you. It can give you that little edge of excitement that results in an enthusiastic, interesting talk. So take a deep breath and start your meeting!

CONDUCTING THE MEETING

Start and end the meeting on time. If you promise to keep it brief – do so.

Observe the KISS rule. Keep it straight-forward and simple. Zero in on just a few key points – don't bore your participants by reviewing the whole safety manual in one session. In this case, less is actually more!

Stick to your agenda. Be flexible enough to respond to concerns, but keep to the topic. Control the meeting – don't let it turn into a social hour or a beef session.

Encourage questions. Remind the participants that there is no such thing as a dumb question. Everyone learns when one person asks a question. These questions will also give you a clue to whether or not you have put your point across to the audience.

You don't have to have all the answers. If you don't know, maybe you can refer the question to another experienced worker in the group. Or promise to look into the matter and report back at the next safety talk.

Find ways to involve members of the group. It will keep their interest, and it will help them to remember what you have been discussing. Ask them for examples of hazards and safeguards related to the topic. Ask everyone to pick a partner, and have them take turns practising the safety technique under discussion.

Use Humor. It will keep the attention of your listeners, and they will be more likely to remember what has been discussed.

Be interested in your topic and the audience. Welcome comments and questions. If you are enthusiastic, your listeners will be too. Repeat their comments in your own words to make sure you understood.

LISTEN to what the participants say to you. Remember that holding Safety Talks is an excellent way to keep in touch with current safety concerns. They are also an excellent way of emphasizing any safety accomplishments that have been gained by the group. If you promise to follow up on a safety concern for (or before) an upcoming meeting – it is extremely important that you do so! There is no better way of losing both credibility and respect if you don't.

Treat your listeners with respect. Keep in mind that many may have years of experience on the job and some may have actually helped develop some of the safety procedures being discussed. When you are talking about a safety topic which is familiar to them, treat it as a review. Remind them that experienced workers can occasionally drift into unsafe habits over a period of time – even if they do know better. Invite experienced workers to comment on issues or demonstrate techniques for the group – this will keep them involved.

End your meeting on a positive note by summing up the key points that are outlined on your copy of the talk along with any further action that will be taken as a result of the safety meeting. Remember to thank the participants for their involvement.