



# WORKPLACE FIRE SAFETY

(EAP)  
EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN  
EXIT MAP

## THINKING ABOUT FIRE SAFETY

A fire is probably the last thing on anyone's mind when they come to work. But fires in the workplace are a real danger. Commercial fires cause billions of dollars in property damage every year and leave thousands injured or dead.

Every workplace should have an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and every worker should know what role they play in that plan.

There are three goals of any EAP. They are:

- **Eliminate** Hazards
- **Educate** Employees
- **Evacuate** Safely

Eliminate

SAMPLE COPY

Educate

Evacuate

## **ELIMINATE HAZARDS**

Common sense goes a long way in preventing workplace fires. Keep objects that might catch fire away from heat sources. The items below are potential fire hazards in different work areas.

### Kitchen/Break Room/Common Areas

- Keep paper products and other combustibles away from heat sources.
- Check for wear and tear on plugs and cords of kitchen appliances like coffee makers, microwaves, or refrigerators.
- Unplug appliances if not in use.
- Keep any holiday decorations or plant life away from heat sources.

### Personal Workspace/Conference Rooms

- Unplug portable appliances (heaters, fans, radios, etc.) when not in use.
- Do not run wire under floor mats or rugs in high traffic areas.
- Check wire and plugs periodically for wear and tear.
- Do not overload electrical outlets.
- Keep objects at least three feet away from space heaters.

### Storage Areas/Utility Closets

- Do not use utility closets to store paper products or cleaners with flammable liquids and gases.
- Keep file boxes and other record storage items away from heat sources.
- Do not obstruct sprinkler heads.

## **NO SMOKING PLEASE!**

A designated smoking area reduces the risk of workplace fires. Keep the smoking area clear of trash and debris that may fuel a fire. Provide ash receptacles that are heavy and deep to prevent tipping. Empty receptacles frequently.

## EDUCATE EMPLOYEES

### Fire Extinguishers in the Workplace

Fire Extinguishers can be used to stop small fires from growing out of control. Multi-purpose fire extinguishers are capable of putting out several common types of fires. Some workplaces may need special fire extinguishers to handle certain types of fires.

### Classes of Fire and Extinguisher Type



Ordinary materials (wood, paper, etc.)



Flammable liquids (grease, gasoline, etc.)



Live (plugged in) electrical equipment



Combustible metals



High-temperature cooking equipment using grease and oil

### USING A FIRE EXTINGUISHER

The P.A.S.S. Method is the simplest way to remember how to operate a fire extinguisher.

**P**ull the pin to unlock the extinguisher.

**A**im the nozzle at the base of the fire.

**S**queeze the lever to release the extinguishing agent.

**S**weep from side to side, at the base of the fire, until it is out.

### Additional Tips

- Only attempt to use an extinguisher if you are familiar with how to operate it.
- Don't start fighting the fire until everyone else has cleared the area.
- Make sure you have a clear path to an exit before using.
- Never use the wrong type of extinguisher on a fire.

Remember: *If there is any doubt, exit the building and leave the firefighting to the professionals.*

## EDUCATE EMPLOYEES

### 1. What's the Plan?

Every workplace needs an emergency action plan in case of fire. The plan needs to be reviewed and practiced regularly. Being familiar with the plan will save crucial seconds in case of an emergency. Your local fire department can assist you in creating a plan that suits your needs.

### 2. Making An Exit

Employees need to know where the emergency exits are in their work place. A floor plan with all escape routes can be posted in break rooms or other high traffic areas.

It is important not to panic. Everyone should exit quickly, but no one should run or push aside other people to get out.

### 3. One Meeting You Can't Be Late For

Designate an area outside the building as a meeting place. This area should be a safe distance from the fire and have an easy to remember landmark. Having everyone meet in one place will help determine if everyone has exited safely.



## **EVACUATE SAFELY**

### **Working From the Top Down**

High rise evacuation plans require the cooperation of everyone in the building. Safety officers should be designated for employees on each floor. They ensure that emergency services are contacted while a safe and orderly exit is conducted.

### **Avoid Elevators at All Costs**

Elevators are NOT an escape option in an emergency. Fire can sweep through the elevator shaft. Occupants may also be trapped if the power fails.



Emergency stairwells are typically located at the outer ends of buildings. Workers should head to the closest accessible stairwell and calmly walk down the flights of stairs to their designated meeting place outside.

### **Stay Low and Go**

Stay low to the ground. The most breathable air during a fire is 12-24 inches from the floor. Crawl on your hands and knees if there is smoke around you.

### **What to Do if You are Trapped**

If smoke and fire block all possible exits, follow these steps:

- Block the space underneath doors with damp paper or cloth. This will slow down both smoke and fire.
- Call the fire department to let them know your location, even if firefighters are already on the scene. Stay in contact with someone to let them know you are still inside.
- Signal firefighters with a white or brightly colored cloth or item. Open a window just far enough to wave the item. Opening too far may cause the fire to spread faster.

**Never Go Back Inside A Burning Building For Any Reason!**



## **EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN REVIEW**

### **The Human Factor**

Smoke alarms will give you some warning of a fire. Sprinkler systems will help put out a fire. But teamwork is the best way to ensure everyone's safety.

### **The Fearless Leader**

Appoint an employee to be fire marshal for the company. Large companies may want to appoint one fire marshal per floor. Responsibilities for the fire marshal include:

- Ensuring that smoke alarms and fire extinguishers are maintained.
- Organizing regular fire drills.
- Posting a floor plan outlining all escape routes.
- Ensuring that all exits are clearly marked.
- Calling the fire department and the proper building personnel in a fire.
- Taking a headcount outside to ensure everyone has safely evacuated.

In any workplace emergency, the top priority is personal safety. Cooperation and communication are essential to saving lives.



**Workplace Fire Safety: *Make it Your Business!***

## **EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN REVIEW**

### **Eliminate Hazards**

- Keep flammable materials away from heat sources.
- Don't overload electrical outlets.
- Unplug electrical appliances when not in use.

### **Educate Employees**

- Post emergency action plans in visible places.
- Hold regular fire drills.
- Learn how to properly use fire extinguishers.

### **Evacuate Safely**

- Use exit stairwells, not elevators.
- Go directly to the designated safe meeting place.
- Crawl low under smoke.
- Never go back inside a burning building.

