

*Fire is one of the most serious causes of loss any organization can face. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), fire is responsible for thousands of injuries and deaths and billions of dollars in property damage losses each year. The purpose of a fire prevention plan is to prevent a fire from occurring in the workplace. The plan identifies fuel sources (such as hazardous or even common combustible materials) that could initiate or contribute to the spread of a fire and the building systems (such as alarm systems and fixed fire extinguishing systems) in place to detect and control the fire.*

### Fire Prevention Plan Elements

According to OSHA, every employer is required to have a fire prevention plan. The plan should be in writing, be kept in the workplace, and be made available to employees for review. An employer with 10 or fewer employees may communicate the plan orally to employees. The minimum requirements of the plan include:

- A list of the major workplace fire hazards (flammable liquids, compressed gasses, etc.) and their proper handling and storage procedures, potential ignition sources (welding, smoking, cooking, etc.) and their controls, and the type of fire protection equipment or systems used to control a fire.
- Names or regular job titles of the persons responsible for maintenance of equipment and systems installed to prevent or control ignitions of fires.
- Names or regular job titles of the persons responsible for control of fuel source hazards.
- Procedures to control accumulations of flammable and combustible waste materials.
- Procedures for regular maintenance of safeguards installed on heat-producing equipment to prevent the accidental ignition of combustible materials. Several of these topics are further discussed below.



### Housekeeping

Housekeeping procedures are an essential component of a fire prevention plan. The employer should control accumulations of flammable and combustible waste materials and residues so they do not contribute to a fire. Examples of housekeeping procedures include emptying inside waste receptacles at a frequency which prevents buildup, removing oily rags from the building every night, storing all combustible materials a safe distance from heat-producing equipment, and vacuuming sawdust and other combustible dusts from the floor.

### Employee Training

Each employee should be made aware of the fire hazards to which they are exposed. Upon initial assignment to the job, the employer should inform the employee of the elements of the fire prevention plan that the employee needs to know to protect himself or herself in the event of an emergency. For example, if an employee has recently been hired to work in the welding department, the employer should inform the employee of the control procedures (e.g.,

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removal of combustible materials within 35 feet, utilization of non-combustible covers) to prevent fires from occurring and what types of equipment (e.g., Class ABC fire extinguishers) are available to control fires in the work area. This training should be documented with the name of the employee, name of the trainer, and date of training.

### Maintenance

Another critical component of a fire prevention plan involves regular maintenance of heat-producing equipment. Examples of maintenance include:

- Verifying that temperature limit switches are in proper working order.
- Cleaning lint traps on commercial dryers.
- Replacing or cleaning grease filters above commercial cooking equipment.
- Maintenance procedures should be included in the written fire prevention plan and communicated to all affected employees.

### For Additional Information

Occupational Safety & Health Administration:

[www.osha.org](http://www.osha.org)

- Evacuation Plans & Procedures eTool