

## Risk Insights

Advice for you and your business

# Fire prevention on construction sites



Establish a solid fire defense with the help of an effective fire prevention plan.

Fires are dangerous and can burn out of control in as little as 30 seconds! An effective loss prevention plan can help you keep your property and possessions safe in the event of a fire.

Consider these fire safety tips in addition to your local fire regulations and requirements:

### 1 Fire Prevention

- Secure the job site with a properly constructed fence and provide safe access.
- Clearly mark all combustible materials, packing materials and explosives, and store them separately at a safe distance from buildings, plants and stores.
- Place marked trash and recyclable containers throughout the job site.
- Install fire doors with automatic door closers and lightning conductors.
- Develop an effective housekeeping program, which includes orderly storage and periodic removal of combustible materials, as well as weekly site cleanup.
- Ensure the site engineer is aware of their responsibility for fire protection on site, and that they patrol the entire site once per shift.
- Place 'No Smoking' signs in areas exposed to fire and in the vicinity of hazardous operations.
- Divide materials and equipment that are stored in buildings, sheds and open air into fire sections and assign a value to each that doesn't exceed \$750,000. Provide sufficient free space between sections to allow access.
- Isolate living quarters from the construction site and provide them with adequate first-aid fire protection. Ensure cooking facilities are properly equipped with well-maintained extinguishers.
- Keep staircases and fire brigade access routes free; don't use them as storage or parking areas.
- Ensure partitions and firewalls between buildings are erected as early as possible.
- Exercise extreme caution for open flame work. Remove or cover all combustible materials in the area, as welding sparks can fly up to 10 metres. Carry out periodic inspections upon completing open flame work.

Fire safety should **always be a top concern in every type of work environment.**

# Fire prevention on construction sites *(continued)*

## 2 Fire Controls

- Report a fire to the site engineer and the person supervising fire protection immediately.
- Post emergency telephone numbers near every telephone on the premise.
- Install a fire alarm system and ensure it gets tested regularly.
- House fully charged portable fire extinguishers on a wall along normal paths of travel in clear view. Place fire extinguisher signs above the extinguisher where they can be visible.
- Ensure sufficient hoses and fittings are available so that all parts of the construction site can be reached with water.
- Develop a fire evacuation plan that clearly outlines each person's responsibility in the event of a fire. Create versions in several languages, if necessary.
- Make sure a watchman is on site at night and during the weekends for conducting periodic rounds.
- Ensure the water supply is sufficient for several hours of firefighting. The pipe system should guarantee a minimum pressure of 3 bars at the most remote point.

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