

KSU Facilities Safety Bulletin

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Emergency and Fire Preparedness

The most common workplace emergency is fire. The best way to prevent injuries and deaths from fires is to prevent fires in the first place.

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), more than 75,000 workplace fires and related explosions occur each year.

All companies should create a basic fire prevention plan for fire safety, which includes a list of the major workplace fire hazards and proper handling and storage procedures for those materials. The plan should also cover potential ignition sources, such as welding and smoking and related control procedures, as well as discuss the type of fire protection equipment or systems which can control a fire. The fire prevention plan must include the names and/or regular job titles of those personnel responsible for maintenance of fire systems and those personnel responsible for control of fuel source hazards.

Dangers of fire include heat, smoke, and toxic gases which all present some very nasty consequences for the personal welfare and life safety of individuals exposed to fire.

Fire safety can include engineered controls, like fire sprinklers, fire alarms, and smoke detectors are mandatory for many modern structures and likely exist where you work.

Emergency Exits and Routes

In the case of a fire emergency, you want to get everyone out of the facility as quickly as possible. Emergency exits and routes are crucial because they provide a clear path to safety. Here are the qualities of effective emergency exits and routes, as specified by OSHA:

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All: Emergency and Fire Preparedness

Emergency Exits

- Must be a permanent part of the building
- Must be provided with a protected way of travel out of the building or out of the area
- May contain way of access of passageways, stairs, aisles and stairwells, ramps, or a series exit doors
- May have ways of access that lead from one area or floor to another or from one building to another

Exit Routes

- Must be clear of obstructions
- Must be kept free of explosive or highly flammable furnishings and other decorations
- Must be wide enough to accommodate the number of people trying to get out
- Must be strong enough to support their weight
- Must be properly lighted and marked with EXIT signs

Alarm Systems

Alarm systems are significant because they alert all employees of a fire emergency, which is the first step in getting to safety. An alarm system may come in the form of a smoke detector, a manual pull box or even a vocal system in which employees alert others by yelling "fire" or some other specified word. If your business is using a smoke detector system the batteries should be changed once a year.

Source: <https://hsi.com/course-library/safety-compliance/osha/emergency-and-fire-safety-preparedness>