

Fire Safety Tips

Fires on construction sites cause major property loss and can be deadly. Developing a site specific fire prevention and inspection policy can minimize the potential for fires on construction sites. Consider these tips for fire safety.

Fire Prevention Policy

OSHA requires that each job site have a fire prevention plan and such plan should include these items:

- Access to all firefighting equipment must be maintained at all times.
- All firefighting equipment must be conspicuously located and maintained.
- Training must be provided to employees who will use fire protection equipment.
- Portable fire extinguishers are required on all job sites.
- Fire emergency reporting numbers should be prominently posted.
- Flammable and combustible liquids must be stored and dispensed properly.
- LP gas-fired equipment must be used and LP cylinders stored in accordance with regulations.
- Ensure workers know how to report a fire or other emergency to minimize response time.
- Develop an inspection program that periodically reviews the fire prevention efforts on the project.

Mobile Equipment

- Accumulations of grass, brush or trash under mobile equipment can be ignited by the engine or exhaust and equipment storage locations should be cleared of these materials.

- During daily equipment inspections note any leaks or seepage from hoses or fittings and replace at the first sign of wear or leakage.
- Only refuel equipment that is turned off and cool. Spilled fuel can be ignited by hot surfaces.
- Keep the equipment clean. Excessive build-up of dirt can cause higher temperatures and increased wear on components.
- Protect against arson and vandalism by locking all engine compartment covers and fuel supplies.
- Keep equipment away from open fires or hot work that could be an ignition source.

Construction Areas

- Enforce a no-smoking rule in all building locations, fueling areas and near combustible/flammable storage locations.
- Only store flammable liquids in approved containers.
- Initiate and enforce a good housekeeping policy to minimize accumulation of scrap and combustible debris
- Locate trash bins/skips away from buildings.
- Install and maintain electrical and temporary heating systems in accordance with manufacturer recommendations.

- Only allow the installation and maintenance of temporary electrical systems to be performed by qualified electricians.
- Inspect temporary electrical equipment periodically for damage.
- Control hazards of cutting and welding using a hot work program or permit system.

Fire Fighting Equipment

- Maintain fire extinguishers and fire suppression systems in accordance with OSHA requirements.
- Inspect fire extinguisher to ensure they are pressurized and quick access to them is not blocked off by materials.
- Ensure fire extinguishers are readily available near hot work operations.
- Ensure fire hydrants are not blocked by equipment or material storage.

Storage Areas

- Maintain storage yards to reduce accumulation of grass, trash or brush that could allow a fire to spread.
- Maintain fueling areas in accordance with OSHA requirements.
- Do not allow dunnage, pallets, cardboard or other scrap to accumulate in storage areas or inside storage containers.

Working with Public Agencies

- Develop site plans that indicate fire department access points for your job site.
- Contact the local fire department and make sure they have the correct address information for your site.
- Identify new street names on plans and verify that local police and fire departments have this information.
- Maintain a 24-hour contact number so law enforcement or fire department personnel can reach you in an emergency or to confirm afterhours site access.
- Request additional patrols and discuss who has after-hours access and authorization with local police.
- Request a pre-plan walk-through by the local fire department to ensure they are familiar with your operations.
- Discuss water volume requirements with fire department personnel to ensure adequate water is available based on type/size of the project.

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