

MBAA Safety Toolbox Talk



Fire Safety

Overview

A fire in any circumstance can be devastating and necessary precautions should be taken to prevent a fire from occurring. Additionally, various requirements must also be met to help eliminate the spread of fires and to protect employees and/or property if a fire were to occur, as described by OSHA, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and local and state fire codes.

Employee Training

All employees must be trained about fire hazards in the workplace, how to prevent fires, and what to do in case there is an emergency, including how to evacuate and where to evacuate to. Employees must be trained in the proper use of a fire extinguisher, if they are expected to use an extinguisher. Lastly, holding fire drills annually on all shifts (or more frequently if required) helps to ensure all employees know what to do and where to go if an actual fire occurs.

Portable Fire Extinguishers

Workplaces are not *required* to have portable fire extinguishers. However, if there are fire extinguishers, hands-on training must be provided on how to properly use them in case of an emergency. Always make sure that fire extinguishers are inspected per local requirements.

Emergency Action Plan

If employers require their employees to evacuate instead of fighting fires with an extinguisher, they must have a written Emergency Action Plan (EAP). In general though, it is typically thought of as good practice for all employers to have an EAP. EAPs should contain at least the following:

- A preferred method for reporting fires and other emergencies;
- An evacuation policy and procedure;

- Emergency escape procedures and route assignments, such as floor plans, workplace maps, and safe or refuge areas;
- Names, titles, departments, and telephone numbers of individuals both within and outside your company to contact for additional information or explanation of duties and responsibilities under the emergency plan;
- Procedures for employees who remain to perform or shut down critical plant operations, operate fire extinguishers, or perform other essential services that cannot be shut down for every emergency alarm before evacuating; and
- Rescue and medical duties for any workers designated to perform them.

Emergency Exits

Workplaces must have enough emergency exits to allow for everyone to quickly exit the facility. In general, this means having at least 2 exit routes for escape purposes. The exact number of exits needed will depend on how many people are in the facility, type of building, size of the building, and fire protection available. Additionally, emergency exits must be kept clear at all times and be properly marked with exit signs and illuminated by emergency lighting.

General Fire Safety Do's and Don'ts

DO:

- Keep combustible and flammable materials (wood, paper, gas, oil, chemicals) away from lights, electrical boxes, machinery, or other heat source or sources of ignition.
- Store flammable and/or oxidizer gas cylinders (e.g., oxygen gas used for wort aeration) properly with signage and train employees on the hazards of storing and using these gases.
- Report and repair electrical hazards that can cause a fire.

- Use caution to prevent ignition in potentially explosive atmospheres such as those containing flammable liquid vapors or fine particles (e.g., combustible grain dust). Use non-sparking tools, and control static electricity as required.
- Store flammable chemicals in approved chemical cabinets.
- Dispose of combustibles like oily rags properly (e.g., in tightly covered metal containers) by removing daily.
- Inspect wires/cords to electrical equipment to ensure they are in good condition.
- Use extension cords only temporarily, when necessary, and if it is rated for the job.
- Maintain at least 3 ft. (36 in.) clearance in front of electrical panels.
- Ensure that all electrical boxes, switches, and outlets have covers.

DO NOT:

- Do not daisy chain power strips (plug one into another).
- Do not use an extension cord with a power strip.
- Do not permanently use temporary wiring (e.g., extension cord).
- Do not use equipment with a damaged or frayed power cord.
- Do not block sprinklers, firefighting equipment or emergency exits. Observe clearances when stacking materials.

LINKS

- [OSHA Safety and Health Topics – Fire Safety](#)
- [OSHA Fact Sheet – Fire Safety in the Workplace](#)

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON BREWERY SAFETY, PLEASE VISIT THE MBAA BREWERY SAFETY WEBSITE AT:
<http://www.mbaa.com/brewresources/brewsafety>