Syracuse Builders Exchange FOUNDED 1872

BIE SAFETY ADVISOR

October is Fire Prevention Month

October 4th-10th is Fire Prevention Week

About Fire Prevention Week: Since 1922, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has sponsored the public observance of Fire Prevention Week. In 1925, President Calvin Coolidge proclaimed Fire Prevention Week a national observance, making it the longest-running public health observance in our country. During Fire Prevention Week, children, adults, and teachers learn how to stay safe in case of a fire. Firefighters provide lifesaving public education in an effort to drastically decrease casualties caused by fires.

Fire Prevention Week is observed each year during the week of October 9th in commemoration of the Great Chicago Fire, which began on October 8, 1871, and caused devastating damage. This horrific conflagration killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,400 structures, and burned more than 2,000 acres of land.

Fire Prevention Month is a good time for employers to review (or develop if you don't have one) your company's fire prevention plan, train or retrain employees regarding evacuation routes and use of portable fire extinguishers, test your fire alarm systems, hold a fire drill, and conduct annual inspections of portable fire extinguishers and any fixed extinguishing systems in your facilities or jobsites. Don't limit your activities to just your company office, shop, and storage facilities. Be sure to include your job sites!

OSHA's regulations for fire protection and prevention can be found in:

29 CFR 1926 Subpart C – General Safety and Health Provisions

- 29 CFR 1926.24 Fire Protection and Prevention
- 29 CFR 1926.34 Means of Egress
- 29 CFR 1926.35 Employee Emergency Action Plans

29 CFR 1926 Subpart F – Fire Protection and Prevention

- 29 CFR 1926.150 Fire Protection
- 29 CFR 1926.151 Fire Prevention
- 29 CFR 1926.152 Flammable Liquids
- 29 CFR 1926.153 Liquified Petroleum Gas (LP-Gas)
- 29 CFR 1926.154 Temporary Heating Devices

29 CFR 1926 Subpart J – Welding and Cutting

- 29 CFR 1926.350 Gas Welding and Cutting
- 29 CFR 1926.351 Arc Welding and Cutting
- 29 CFR 1926.352 Fire Prevention

Fire Prevention Plans: Help prevent a fire from occurring in the workplace. It describes the fuel sources on site that could initiate a fire or contribute to the spread of a fire, as well as the extinguishing systems and alarms in place to control the ignition and/or spread of a fire.

Portable Fire Extinguishers: Can be an effective early response to a developing fire, if they are installed and used properly.

See the NFPA's webpage: Fire Prevention Week (FPW) (nfpa.org) to learn more about this year's fire prevention week theme.

Monthly Toolbox Talk

Fire Protection and Control

Most fires are a result of inattention to the job site operations and surrounding conditions. This lack of attention or protection can result in the loss of life and property. All fires can be easily extinguished if caught soon enough and the proper extinguishing tools are handy.

Guide for Discussion

Steps to Remember When a Fire Starts:

- Call 911 and Sound the alarm—yell if necessary.
- Warn those near the fire.
- If possible and the fire is small, try to extinguish it. (This will be dependent on company policy and training)
- Call the Fire Department if the fire can't be easily and quickly extinguished.
- Evacuate the area if the fire can't be quickly extinguished.
- Direct the Fire Department to the area of the fire.

Be Sure to Know the Following:

- The Fire Department phone number. (911)
- Be sure you know the location of the nearest cross street to give the Fire Department directions.
- Where the fire extinguishers are and how to use them.
- How to evacuate the work area.

Steps to Prevent Fires

- Regularly inspect all fire extinguishers.
- Keep the work area free of debris and trash.
- Designate high-risk areas as "no smoking" areas. Enforce no smoking rules.
- Store flammable fuels and materials only in approved safety containers.
- Check temporary wiring and electrical tools for defects.

Additional Discussion Notes:

Where are the emergency numbers and job site location (including nearest cross streets) posted on the job?
If welding equipment is on the job, when is it regularly inspected?

Remember:
Knowing how to recognize, react to, or eliminate fire hazards can greatly decrease the chances of being exposed to a fire.