

October 3 - 9 is National Fire Prevention Week!

October, 2004 - Volume 1, Number 15, Page 1

Each year during the October edition of the Cambridge Risk Control Safety Newsletter, we like to focus on the fire protection & safety side of the Risk Management field. We hope that you and your employees find this year's fire protection special edition helpful to your safety effort.

Fire Protection Guide For Small Business

A fire can have a devastating impact on small businesses, some which are home-based. A fire can race through a structure/business in a matter of minutes, giving your employees and you little time to escape.

For a home-based business, a working smoke alarm and fire escape plan are essential. Smoke alarms should be installed on every level of a building, including the basement, on ceilings or high on walls. They should be tested once a month, according to manufacturer's instructions. Batteries should be replaced once a year or as soon as the smoke alarm "chirps," indicating the battery is low. Smoke alarms should be replaced every 10 years, even those that are hard-wired, or "long life," 10-year battery-types. Hard-wired alarms should be installed by a qualified electrician.

For small businesses based outside the home, contact your local fire department to determine the fire alarm requirements for your building. In addition to maintaining smoke alarms or smoke detectors, it is essential that businesses develop and practice a basic fire escape plan so employees know what to do when an alarm sounds. Involve as many people as practical in putting together your plan, including disabled employees. As part of your plan, have employees:

- study posted evacuation plans
- learn two ways out of each work area
- count the number of desks or work stations between where they work and the nearest two exits

"A fire can race through a structure/business in a matter of minutes, giving your employees and you little time to escape."

Also, designate an outside meeting place where everyone can gather after they've escaped, and devise a system to account for everyone in the building. Practice your escape plan at least twice a year.

If your emergency plan includes the use of portable fire extinguishers, keep in mind that a properly maintained portable fire extinguisher can quickly put out a small fire or control a larger one until the fire department arrives. But the number one priority should be for everyone to evacuate safely and call the fire department. Employees appointed to use a fire extinguisher must become familiar with its operation before a fire breaks out. They should only operate the fire extinguisher if they have an unobstructed escape route and are comfortable handling the situation. They should begin discharging the extinguisher six to eight feet away from the fire and move closer as the fire diminishes.

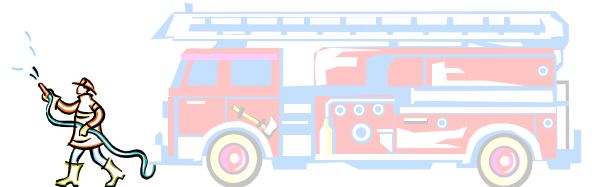
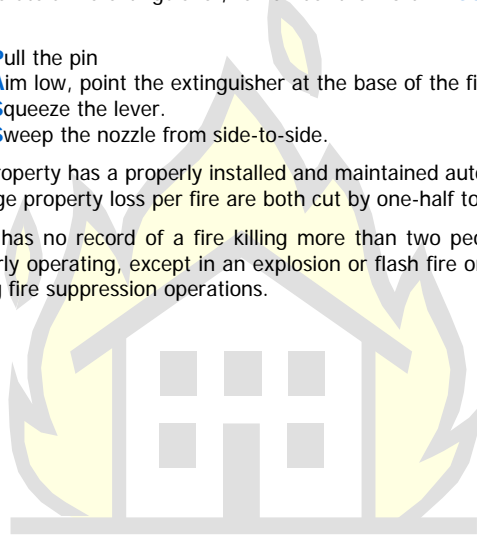
To operate a fire extinguisher, remember the word **PASS**: Holding the extinguisher with the nozzle pointing away from you:

- P**ull the pin
- A**im low, point the extinguisher at the base of the fire.
- S**queeze the lever.
- S**weep the nozzle from side-to-side.

"PASS – Pull, Aim, Squeeze, Sweep"

If a property has a properly installed and maintained automatic fire sprinkler system, the chances of dying in a fire and the average property loss per fire are both cut by one-half to two-thirds, compared to properties that don't have sprinklers.

NFPA has no record of a fire killing more than two people in a completely sprinklered building where the system was properly operating, except in an explosion or flash fire or where industrial fire brigade members or employees were killed during fire suppression operations.



Automatic Fire Sprinkler Systems – Where Did They Come From?

(By Jody Warner, CSP, CFPS, Cambridge Risk Control Department)

From 1852 to 1885, perforated pipe systems were used in textile mills throughout New England as a means of fire protection. However, they were not automatic systems, they did not turn on by themselves. Inventors first began experimenting with automatic sprinklers around 1860. The first automatic sprinkler system was patented by Philip W. Pratt of Abington, MA, in 1872.

Henry S. Parmalee of New Haven, Connecticut is considered the inventor of the first practical automatic sprinkler head. Parmalee improved upon the Pratt patent and created a better sprinkler system. In 1874, he installed his fire sprinkler system into the piano factory that he owned.

Until the 1940s, sprinklers were installed almost exclusively for the protection of commercial buildings, whose owners were generally able to recoup their expenses with savings in insurance costs. Over the years, fire sprinklers have become mandatory safety equipment, and are required by building codes to be placed in hospitals, schools, hotels and other public buildings.

2004 Dates To Remember:

January:

Plan Your Safety Training Now!
Call Jody For Training Ideas!
312-381-8208

February:

Child Passenger Safety Week

March:

Poison Prevention Week
Workplace Eye Safety Month
Save Your Vision Month

April:

Sports Eye Safety Month
Intl Building Safety Week
Work Zone Aware. Week
Playground Safety Week

May:

Clean Air Month
Melanoma Awareness Month
Electrical Safety Month
National EMS Week
Poison Prevention Week

June:

National Safety Month

July:

EYE INJURY PREV. MONTH

August:

Prepare Your Winter Safety Training!

September:

19-25 Farm Safety/Health Week

October:

3-9 Nat. Fire Prevention Week
4-8 Drive Safely Work Week
17-23 Radon Action Week

November:

Take advantage of the weather and do your classroom training!

December:

"3D Month" - National Drunk & Drugged Driving Prevention Month

Fire Extinguishers, A Closer Look

October, 2004 - Volume 1, Number 15, Page 2

(By Jody Warner, CSP, CFPS, Cambridge Risk Control Department)

Fires can be very dangerous and you should always be certain that you won't endanger yourself or others when attempting to put out a fire. For this reason, when a fire is discovered:

- Assist any person in immediate danger to safety, if it can be accomplished without risk to yourself.
- Activate the building fire alarm system or notify the fire department by dialing 911 (or designating someone else to notify them for you). When you activate the building fire alarm system, it will automatically notify the fire department and get help on the way. It will also sound the building alarms to notify other occupants, and it will shut down the air handling units to prevent the spread of smoke throughout the building.
- Only after having done these two things, if the fire is small, you may attempt to use an extinguisher to put it out.

However, before deciding to fight the fire, keep these rules in mind:

- **Know what's burning.** If you don't know what is burning, you don't know what type of extinguisher to use. Even if you have an ABC extinguisher, there may be something in the fire that is going to explode or produce highly toxic smoke. Chances are, you *will* know what's burning, or at least have a pretty good idea, but if you don't, let the fire department handle it.
- **The fire is spreading rapidly beyond the spot where it started.** The time to use an extinguisher is in the incipient, or beginning, stages of a fire. If the fire is already spreading quickly, it is best to simply evacuate the building, closing doors and windows behind you as you leave.
- **You don't have adequate or appropriate equipment.** If you don't have the correct type or large enough extinguisher, it is best not to try to fight the fire.
- **You might inhale toxic smoke.** If the fire is producing large amounts of smoke that you would have to breathe in order to fight it, it is best not to try. Any sort of combustion will produce some amount of carbon monoxide, but when synthetic materials such as the nylon in carpeting or foam padding in a sofa burn, they can produce highly toxic gases such as hydrogen cyanide, acrolein, and ammonia in addition to carbon monoxide. These gases can be fatal in very small amounts.
- **Your instincts tell you not to.** If you are uncomfortable with the situation for any reason, just let the fire department do their job.

The final rule is to **always position yourself with an exit or means of escape at your back** before you attempt to use an extinguisher to put out a fire. In case the extinguisher malfunctions, or something unexpected happens, you need to be able to get out quickly, and you don't want to become trapped. Just remember, **always keep an exit at your back**.

* * Smoke Detectors Save Lives * *

Roughly 70 percent of home fire deaths result from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms. They are one of the great safety success stories of the 20th century — **but only when they're working properly**. Because fire can grow and spread so quickly, having working smoke alarms in your home can mean the difference between life and death. But these life-saving devices are only effective when they're working properly. Smoke alarms with dead, disconnected or missing batteries can't alert you to the dangers of smoke and fire.

Once the alarm sounds, you may have as few as two minutes to escape. By learning how to effectively use the smoke alarm's early warning to get out safely, you'll reduce your risk of dying in a fire. Plan your escape route, inform your family and practice every 6 months.

Cambridge Integrated Services
Risk Control Department
175 West Jackson, Suite 1000
Chicago, IL 60604
phone 312-381-8072
fax 312-381-9811
www.cambridgeriskcontrol.com

Mark Almburg
Risk Control Manager
312-381-8240
mark_almburg@cisqi.com

Steve Rusicka, CHSP
Risk Control Supervisor, East
800-686-2762 x416
steve_rusicka@cisqi.com

John Tahlier, MS
Risk Control Supervisor, Midwest
608-837-7602
john_tahlier@cisqi.com

Jody Warner, CSP, CFPS
Training & Technical Services
Web & Newsletter Editor
312-381-8208
jody_warner@cisqi.com

Safety Resource Center

It's Good To Know:

Although fires in residential structures account for about 70% of firefighter fireground injuries in structures, the highest rate of firefighter injuries per 100 fires occur in industry, utility, defense, and manufacturing facilities.

Based on 1995-199 experience, children under the age of 5 are twice as likely to perish in a home fire as the average person.

Older adults age 65 or over are more than twice as likely to perish (in a home fire) as the average person.

In the U.S., males have a 39% higher risk of home fire death than females.

Source: NFPA

Fire Safety Handouts:

Were you aware that you can download different fire and safety handouts from the Cambridge Risk Control website?

There are also many other safety handouts that can be obtained by asking your Cambridge Risk Control field representative.

Topics available:

[Fire Safety for Home or Office](#)
[The Facts About Gasoline](#)

A few of the topics available from your Safety Representative:

[The Fire Triangle](#)
[Choosing The Right Extinguisher](#)
[Flammable Liquids & Solids](#)

[Cambridge Risk Control Safety Handouts.](#)

Safety Tip:

Remember "EDITH"

- **Exit**
- **Drills**
- **In**
- **The**
- **Home**

Plan your escape from your home (or office) and practice at least every 6 months. Fire Drills work!