

# Howard Talks Tech

## What Can Be Done to Protect Workers from Fire-Related Injury?

After a firm has complied with the provisions of the local fire and building code; fire safety is a matter of providing workers with education and motivating them to learn life-safety procedures. An average of 37,000 fires occur at industrial and manufacturing properties every year. I believe that the following management actions contribute to fire safety.

1. Go beyond minimum life safety code provisions, use reflective arrows, markers, & intelligent exit signs to assist in evacuation.
2. Prepare a written Employee Emergency Action Plan. (29 CFR 1910.38).
3. Mandate 'Good Housekeeping' in all work areas. Combustible dust is leading cause of fires
4. Institute a "Hot-Work"/Welding Permit system - 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of workplace fires.
5. Teach how to recognize the alarm and evacuate the building in the event of a fire.
6. Have frequent, (at least annually) fire drills. Have observers critique performance.
7. Prepare a written Fire Prevention Plan. (29 CFR 1910.39).
8. Keep egress paths always open. Remove combustible waste at the end of each shift.
9. Teach the hazards & precautions for flammable liquids. 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of workplace fires.
10. Institute a Preventive Maintenance program for all equipment - 4<sup>th</sup> leading fire cause
11. Inspect for electrical code violations - 5<sup>th</sup> leading cause of workplace fires.
12. Maintain fire doors & other life safety/ fire compartmentation / suppression equipment.
13. Inspect annually, if present, all rolling steel fire doors - see NFPA 80.
14. Purchase safety cabinets and safety cans to store flammable liquids used on site.
15. Provide "Flame Resistant" lab coats, uniforms or coveralls for all 'at risk' employees.
16. Insist that employees wear Arc-flash rated PPE when performing electrical tasks.
17. Teach employees the "Drop and Roll" technique for clothing fires.
18. Teach employees how to correctly use fire blankets, if available – on the floor.
19. Teach employees first aid and CPR – provide good response equipment and supplies.
20. Teach basic operating principles for the use of portable suppression equipment.
21. Prohibit smoking except in designated areas – Smoking causes 30% of fire deaths in U.S.
22. Maintain perimeter landscaped areas to control brush & wild fires.
23. Sponsor, "Brown-Bag" lunch discussions about relevant topics, i.e., static, lightning, etc.
24. Sponsor awareness programs during Fire Prevention Week (Early October). E.D.I.T.H.
25. Subsidize the purchase of safety equipment for the home, i.e., smoke detectors.