

Information Bulletin

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Smoking Control Program

Introduction

Year after year, numerous fires are attributed to carelessly discarded lighted smoking materials. Smoking materials have always been a notorious cause of industrial and office fires. In order to control this source of ignition, it is imperative that management enforce a smoking control program that limits smoking to “safe” areas of the facility.

In most cases a program which totally prohibits smoking within the facility is not realistic. With total prohibition, oftentimes smokers will sneak and smoke in more hazardous unoccupied areas of the facility. People will smoke, prohibition notwithstanding. Therefore, it is necessary to control the source of ignition presented by smoking materials.

Evaluation and Guidelines

To control smoking, periodic surveys must be conducted by management to determine those areas in which smoking can be permitted and those areas in which it should be absolutely prohibited. Once these areas have been established management should:

- Determine disciplinary penalties for those who violate the smoking regulations.
- Establish and placard “No Smoking” zones and inform employees of the reasons for the prohibitions.
- Adequately mark those areas in which smoking is going to be permitted, and provide the areas for proper disposal of smoking materials.
- Take prompt disciplinary actions against violators of the smoking regulations. Management should also observe all smoking regulations.
- Inform visitors, especially outside contractors of the facility smoking regulations and make sure that they observe them.

The extent of the smoking regulations should be based on the hazards present in each specific area in each individual facility. Naturally, there are some places which contain severe hazards (such as flammable liquids and gases) where it is obvious that smoking cannot be permitted under any circumstances. There are other areas such as warehouses where smoking can be allowed within properly arranged rooms or areas. There are also places in which smoking may be allowed throughout the facility (such as office buildings excluding computer rooms) and the main emphasis is on proper disposal practices.

In establishing “No Smoking” zones, the area should extend beyond the actual hazard area and should be based on the worst possible conditions (such as a spill of flammable liquids, or a malfunction in ventilation. It is very important that No Smoking signs be posted to identify the boundaries of the “No Smoking” zone. It may be necessary to post signs in more than one language based on the languages spoken in the facility.

In the remaining building sections where smoking is allowed, it is important that management provide an ample number of ashtrays or other proper containers for discarding smoking materials. The ashtrays should hold cigarettes in such a way that they will fall only into the ashtray while burning unattended. Also, employees should be instructed not to empty ashtrays into wastebaskets or other ordinary trash containers. Non-combustible containers should be provided for disposal of butts and ashes. No other trash should be placed in these designated containers.

Smoking regulations must apply to everyone. Management should periodically review the smoking regulations to be sure they have kept pace with changes in the facility.