

OHBA Safety Pages: Fire Prevention

Accidental fires are an unusual occurrence in most workplaces. It is easy to take for granted some of the everyday hazards that, if overlooked, can contribute to the occurrence of these fires. Here are some general tips to help prevent accidental fires at work, as well as at your home:



- Dispense flammable liquids only in areas free from sparks, flames, and other sources of ignition.
- Keep all containers of flammable liquids closed or covered when they are not in use. And return them to their designated storage area when you are done using them.
- When dispensing flammable liquid from one container into another, bond the two containers together and ground one. This helps prevent the build-up of static electricity, which can create a spark and ignite the vapors.
- Discard all rags and waste materials that are impregnated with flammable or combustible liquids, oil, or grease in covered, self-closing metal containers (should be colored red) and empty these containers into designated receptacles at the end of your shift.
- Keep all wastepaper, cardboard, and similar combustible materials cleaned up and placed in designated waste receptacles. Letting these items accumulate on the floor or other work areas creates an unnecessary fire hazard.
- Only use flame or spark-producing equipment, such as welders, torches, and grinders, in designated areas. Special approval of management must be obtained to use this type of equipment in areas where it is not normally used (discuss your company's "hot-work permit", if you have one).



- Smoking is allowed only in designated areas. Always dispose of butts in designated receptacles (if you have implemented a smoking ban at your site, discuss that instead).
- Make certain to avoid stacking materials too close to fire sprinkler heads, as doing so can affect their ability to disperse water adequately when activated; usually we must maintain a minimum of 18 inches of clearance below the level of the sprinkler heads.
- Make sure portable fire extinguishers remain fully charged and accessible at all times.



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SAFETY PAGE MEETING GUIDE

Topic: Fire Prevention

Employer: _____ Project: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____ Shift: _____

Number in crew: _____ Number attending: _____

Safety or Health issues discussed. Include recent accident investigations and hazards involving tools, equipment, the work environment, work practices and any Safety or Health recommendations:

Follow up on recommendations from last safety meeting:

Record of those attending:

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Supervisor's remarks: _____

Supervisor: _____ (Print) _____ (Signature)

OHBA Safety Pages: Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters

If you have power tools and/or extension cords on your job sites, you must take steps to ensure that these tools are properly grounded to prevent injury. This Safety Page topic covers the two options available to you to comply with this requirement.

OR-OSHA has written these rules dealing with ground fault circuit interrupter protection. This rule provides increased safety for construction workers using electrical equipment and tools and provides uniformity in what is required by Oregon Building Codes. The following is the OAR 437-003-0404 in Division 3/K.

437-003-0404 Branch circuits.

(1) General. Use ground fault circuit interrupters specified in (2) below OR an assured equipment grounding conductor program as in (3) below. These requirements are in addition to any other requirements for equipment grounding conductors.

(2) All 125-volt, single-phase, 15-, 20-, and 30-ampere receptacles on construction sites that are for temporary power and are available for use by employees must have approved ground-fault circuit interrupters.

(a) GFI protection must be at the outlet end of the circuit. Extension cords or other devices with listed ground-fault circuit interrupter protection for personnel identified for portable are acceptable.

(3) Assured equipment grounding conductor program: Receptacles more than 125-volt, single-phase, 30-amperes must have protection that complies with (2) above, or an assured equipment grounding conductor program that complies with the following:

(a) A written description of the program, including the employer's specific procedures. The program must be at the job site for inspection and copying by the Administrator and any affected employee.

(b) The employer must designate one or more competent persons (defined in §1926.32(f)) to implement the program.

(c) Before each day's use, visually inspect each extension cord, or other device, and any equipment connected by cord and plug, for external defects, such as deformed or missing pins or insulation damage, and for signs of possible internal damage. Extension cords, devices and receptacles not exposed to damage are exempt from this inspection. Do not use damaged or defective equipment.

(d) Do these tests on all extension cords, other devices and receptacles that are not part of the permanent wiring of the building or structure, and cord- and plug-connected equipment required to be grounded:

(A) Test all equipment grounding conductors for continuity.

(B) Test each receptacle or plug to assure the equipment grounding conductor is connected to its proper terminal.

(e) Do all required tests:

(A) Before first use;

(B) Before first use after repair;

(C) Before use after any incident that reasonably could cause damage (for example, when a cord set is run over); and

(D) At intervals not longer than 3 months. Inspect fixed extension cords, other devices and receptacles not exposed to damage at least every 6 months.

(f) Record all tests required in this paragraph. This test record must identify each receptacle, cord set, and cord- and plug-connected equipment that passed the test and indicate the last date of testing or the test interval. Keep this record by means of logs, color coding, or other effective means. Keep the record until replaced by a newer record. The record must be available on the job site for inspection by the Administrator and any affected employee.

Employers have to provide GFCI equipment for the employees, unless the General Contractors supply GFCI-equipped temporary power for the job that will meet these requirements. It would be a good idea for Sub-Contractors to test the electrical supply to ensure it is GFCI equipped. This type of tester is readily available for only a few dollars. If, however, the General Contractor does not supply GFCI-equipped temporary power, then you must supply it for your employees. If you have any questions or need help with this rule call OR-OSHA technical resources at 503-378-3272 or 800-922-2689.



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OHBA Safety Pages: Gasoline Safety

- Never use or store around an open flame, pilot lights, portable heaters or other ignition sources!
- Never smoke or permit smoking while being dispensed or near storage location!
- Never use to start, restart or accelerate a fire!
- Never refill gasoline engines when hot!
- Never use as a hand cleaner!
- Never use as a solvent to clean things!
- Always store in proper safety cans that are rated for gasoline and DOT approved!
- Never store in glass or plastic bottle containers!
- Dispense in a well-ventilated area!
- Remove clothing that has been soaked by gasoline!
- Limit the amount in the workplace!



1 gallon of gasoline = 20 sticks of dynamite!

An ignited gasoline fireball can reach
temperatures of 15,000 degrees F.



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OHBA Safety Pages: Utility Knife Safety

There's one hand tool that demands your respect over many others in the workplace, a tool that can cut you to the bone in an instant . . . the utility knife.

Many workers use utility knives, but one wrong move and they can do serious harm.

In fact, nearly 40 percent of all injuries attributed to manual workshop tools in the US involve knives with retractable blades.

Many accidents involving utility knives occur for the following reasons:

- Drawing the knife towards you instead of away from your body.
- Working with a dull blade. (They require more pressure, increasing the potential for injury.)
- Trying to cut more than the knife can handle.
- Improperly storing the knife with the blade extended.
- Failing to wear personal protective equipment.
- Neglecting to inspect the tool before use.



There have been cases where workers have suffered injuries from exposed blade tips. This is because the blades did not completely retract into the handle. That's why it's important for workers to use the proper size blades or replace defective retraction mechanisms. Some companies use self-retracting utility knives – the blade automatically retracts when not in use. The following are safety precautions to keep in mind when using utility knives:

- Wear safety glasses to protect your eyes in case a blade breaks.
- Always use a sharp blade. They are safer than a dull blade.
- Wear cut resistant gloves and sleeves (at least Level 3) to protect your hands and arms.
- Hand a utility knife to a co-worker with the handle first.
- Use one of the newer model self-retracting blade knives.
- If the application allows, use one of the new knives with a shielded knife surface.
- Consider using a rounded tip blade if the application allows for such.
- Ensure the blades are properly positioned in the handle before use.
- Keep extremities out of the cutting path.
- Don't apply too much pressure on the blade.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions when changing blades.
- Don't use utility knives to pry loose objects.
- Dispose of dull or broken blades in a puncture-resistant container.
- Use of disposable knives with breakaway blades is not meant for industrial use.



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