**Fire and Electrical Safety**

**Tips on keeping your location from experiencing these types of incidences, that could have potentially deadly consequences.**

Whether you are Suzie Secretary or Mike the Maintenance man, **EVERYONE** plays an important role in keeping your facility safe from fire and electrical incidence. All staff members should take a proactive approach in safeguarding your location from suffering such an incident.

According to Richard Campbell’s National Fire Protection Association report on U.S Structure Fires in Office Properties, during the five-year period of 2007-2011, the NFPA estimates that U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 3,340 fires in office properties per year. These fires caused an annual average of four civilian deaths, 44 civilian fire injuries, and $112 million in direct property damage.

More than one in every four office property fires (29%) was caused by cooking equipment, but these fires accounted for just 6% of the direct property damage experienced by office properties. Fires that were intentionally set caused the largest share of direct property damage (20%), while causing 10% of office property fires. Electrical distribution and lighting equipment was the second leading cause of office property fires (12%) of fires, while causing 15% of direct property damage

Just over one-fifth (22%) of the reported fires in office properties began in the kitchen or cooking area, causing one percent of the direct property damage. The highest share of direct property damage (24% of total) resulted from fires starting in an office, which were the cause of 12% of office property fires. Although just two percent of office fires began in the attic, ceiling/roof assembly or concealed space, they were responsible for 13% of the direct property damage. Four out of five office property fires were confined to the room of origin.

When present, wet pipe sprinklers operated 90% of the time in fires large enough to activate the equipment, and they were effective in 88% of these fires. Deaths per 1,000 fires were 62% lower in stores and offices equipped with wet pipe sprinklers compared to properties with no automatic extinguishing equipment. (August 2013).

In this document, the Office of Risk Management intends to help our locations in identifying such hazards and possibly prevent such an event from happening in your facility.

General Fire Prevention Tips:

* Good house keeping practices: Keep offices and storage areas free of clutter and unused items. Do not store items closer than 24 inches to the ceiling in non-sprinklered areas and 18 inches in sprinklered areas. Dispose of unused items, cardboard and paper products promptly.
* Do not use any type of candles. Keep flashlights handy for emergency purposes.
* Kitchen: When cooking or reheating food, do not leave the kitchen for any reason; If you must leave the kitchen areas, turn off the appliance in use.
* Space Heaters: If you must use a space heater, exercise extreme caution. Keep adequate heater clearance from combustible objects. Under NO CIRCUMSTCNES should an extension cord be used. Unplug heater from outlet after use.
* Portable fire extinguishers: Be sure your location has the proper amount and type for your location’s size. Be sure to have them inspected annually.
* Use Flammable Storage Cabinets: If you have flammable chemicals, cleaners or paints at your location (especially in the maintenance area) be sure to use the appropriately graded fire cabinet.
* Do not use stairwells as storage areas.
* Be sure to have your fire alarm/detection system checked annually by properly licensed and insured fire system service company.
* Individual smoke alarms (typical home style alarms) should be tested monthly.

Electrical Safety Tips:

* Only use one heat-producing appliance (such as a coffee maker, toaster, space heater, etc.) plugged into a receptacle outlet at a time.
* Major appliances (refrigerators, dryers, washers, stoves, air conditioners, microwave ovens,
etc.) should be plugged directly into a wall receptacle outlet. Extension cords and plug strips should not be used.
* Arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) shut off electricity when a dangerous condition occurs. Consider having them installed at your facility.
* Use ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) to reduce the risk of shock. GFCIs shut off an electrical circuit when it becomes a shock hazard. They should be installed in bathrooms, kitchens, garages and basements. All outdoor receptacles should be GFCI protected.
* Test AFCIs and GFCIs once a month according to the manufacturer’s recommendations. You do not need a flame to start a fire. Fires can start when heat builds up near things that burn. This can happen when a hot light bulb is near things that burn, such as cloth or paper, or a cord has been placed under a carpet.
* Check electrical cords to make sure they are not running across doorways or under carpets. Extension cords are intended for temporary use. Have a qualified electrician add more receptacle outlets so you do not have to use extension cords.
* Do not overload outlets or use extension cords in place of outlets. Call an electrician to install additional outlets as necessary.
* Ensure plugs fit snugly in outlets to prevent shock and excess heat.
* Use the right light bulb wattage for all lamps and fixtures.
* Discard Frayed or broken cords. NEVER splice two cords together.
* Be sure to use power strips properly. No overloading or “piggy backing “of power strips.
* Breakers and disconnecting switches are properly labeled to indicate use.