

Toolbox Talks

Fire Prevention



Fire Prevention: Vehicles

Let's look at vehicle fires; this applies to automobiles as well as forklifts & other powered industrial equipment you use. Between 2002-2005, highway-type vehicle fires accounted for 18% of reported fires & 13% of U.S. deaths. On average, 33 highway vehicle fires were reported per hour. These fires killed one person a day. Cars & other passenger vehicles account for the vast majority of highway vehicle fires & associated losses. In 2002-2005, only 19% of highway vehicle fire actually occurred on highways; 33% occurred on streets, roads, or driveways, & 17% were in parking lots.

Most vehicle fires resulted from mechanical or electrical failures or malfunctions.

- o Have your vehicles inspected at least annually by a trained, professional technician.

- o Watch for fluid leaks under vehicles, cracked or blistered hoses, or wiring that is loose, has exposed metal, or has cracked insulation. Have any of these conditions inspected & repaired as soon as possible.

- o Be alert to changes in the way your vehicle sounds when running or to a visible plume of exhaust coming from the tailpipe. A louder than usual exhaust tone, smoke coming from the tailpipe, or a backfiring exhaust could mean problems or damage to the high-temperature exhaust & emission control system on the vehicle. Have vehicles inspected & repaired as soon as possible if exhaust or emission control problems are suspected.

If a vehicle fire occurs:

- o Stop – If possible, pull to the side of the road, & turn off the ignition to shut off the electric current & stop the flow of gasoline. Keep the hood closed, because more oxygen can make the fire larger.

- o Get Out – Make sure everyone gets out of the vehicle. Then move at least 100 feet away.

- o Call for Help – Call 9-1-1. Firefighters are specially trained to combat vehicle fires. Never return to the vehicle to attempt to fight the fire yourself. Vehicle fires can be tricky, even for firefighters.

Fire Prevention: Home Heating

Did you know that heating is the #2 reason of home fires? In 2005, heating equipment was involved in 62,200 reported U.S. home structure fires, with 670 deaths, 1,550 injuries, & \$909 million in direct property damage. Nearly half of all home heating fires occurred in December, January, & February in 2002-2005.

The use of portable space heaters were responsible for almost 1/3 of all home heating fires & 3/4 of all deaths in 2005. The top reason was heating equipment too close to things that can burn, such as upholstered furniture, clothing, mattresses, or bedding.



All information found at www.safetytoolboxtalks.com



Fire Prevention Tips



→ **Smoke Alarms:**

- o Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area, & on every level of the home. For the best protection, interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.

- o Test smoke alarms at least once a month using the test button.

- o Replace smoke alarms every 10 years.

- o Make sure everyone can hear the sound of the smoke alarms. Talking smoke alarms have been found to be more effective with sleeping children.

- o Have a home fire escape plan. Know at least two ways out of every room, if possible, & a meeting place outside. Practice your escape plan twice a year.

- o When the smoke alarm sounds, get out & stay out.

→ **Electrical:**

- o Keep lamps, light fixtures, & light bulbs away from anything that can burn, such as lamp shades, bedding, curtains, & clothing.

- o Replace cracked & damaged electrical cords.

- o Use extension cords for temporary wiring only.

- o Consider having additional circuits or receptacles added by a qualified electrician.

- o Call a qualified electrician or landlord if you have recurring problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers, discolored or warm wall outlets, flickering lights, or a burning or rubbery smell coming from an appliance.

→ **Smoking:**

- o If you smoke, smoke outside.

- o Wherever you smoke, use deep, sturdy ashtrays.

- o Never smoke in a home where oxygen is used.

- o Keep matches & lighters up high in a locked cabinet, out of the reach of children.

- o Never smoke in bed or when you are drowsy.

Portable Fire Extinguishers

Know the extinguisher to use for each fire class:

- (A) for fires involving combustibles like wood or paper

- (B) for flammable liquids & gases

- (C) for fires where electricity may be present

- (D) for combustible metals like magnesium

Fire extinguishers are labeled for use on either a single class of fire (A) or (D), or for multiple classes fires (BC) or (ABC). Only trained employees should use fire extinguishers.

Keep the PASS method in mind when using a fire extinguisher:

- P:** Pull the pin

- A:** Aim hose at the base of the fire

- S:** Squeeze the trigger

- S:** Sweep back & forth with the extinguisher



Remember these firefighting tips:

- o Most fire extinguishers are emptied in less than a minute.
- o Do not attempt to fight a large fire.
- o Always leave yourself a way out--keep your back to an exit.