



In the Know's Inservice Club  
presents  
A Workplace Safety Module:  
**Fire Prevention & Safety**

We hope you enjoy this Inservice, prepared especially for nursing assistants like you. You work very hard, and we appreciate the effort you make to complete these educational materials. It shows your desire to continue learning and growing in your profession.

**What will you learn?**

*After finishing this inservice, you will be able to:*

- List the 3 elements that create a fire.
- Identify the types of fire extinguishers most commonly used.
- Describe the steps used for operating a fire extinguisher.
- List the steps for reporting a fire in your workplace.
- Define RACE and PASS.
- Describe emergency escape routes for you and your clients.
- And more!

**Instructions for the Learner**

If you are studying the inservice on your own, please do the following:

- Read through **all** the material. You may find it useful to have a highlighting marker nearby as you read. Highlight any information that is new to you or that you feel is especially important.
- If you have questions about anything you read, please ask \_\_\_\_\_.
- Take the quiz. Think about each statement and pick the best answer.
- Check with your supervisor for the right answers. You only need **6 correct** to pass!
- Print your name, write in the date, and then sign your name.
- Keep the inservice information for yourself and turn in the quiz page to \_\_\_\_\_ no later than \_\_\_\_\_.
- Show your Inservice Club Membership Card to \_\_\_\_\_ so that it can be initialed.

**THANK YOU!**



# Learning About Fire Safety: What's the Big Deal?

Fire safety is *very* important business. **Why?**

- ◆ Based on the National Safety Council figures, fires cost U. S. workplaces over \$2 billion every year.
- ◆ Of the 4200 people who lose their lives due to fires every year, the National Safety Council figures that over 300 of them died in workplace fires.
- ◆ Fires and burns account for more than 3% of all fatalities on the job.

In the US, there is a long and sad history of workplace fires. One of the most famous was the fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in New York City in 1911. Nearly 150 women and young girls died because of locked fire exits and poor fire extinguishing systems.

Several years ago history repeated itself. In Hamlet, NC, 25 workers died in a fire in a poultry processing plant. In this case, there were problems with fire extinguishing systems **and** fire exits.



## ***Who is responsible for making your workplace safe?***

When OSHA (the **O**ccupational **S**afety and **H**ealth **A**dministration) conducts workplace inspections, it checks to see whether employers are following their standards for fire safety. The standards that OSHA requires employers to meet are:

- proper exits
- fire fighting equipment (extinguishers, sprinklers, hoses)
- proper employee training.

The goal of these standards is to prevent fire deaths and injuries in the workplace—with *your* help! The more you know about fire safety, the safer your workplace will be.

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# WHAT IS FIRE?



Fire is a *chemical reaction* that involves the burning of a fuel. It needs **3** elements to happen. If you take away any one of these elements, the fire can't start or it will go out if it was already burning.

F  
U  
E  
L

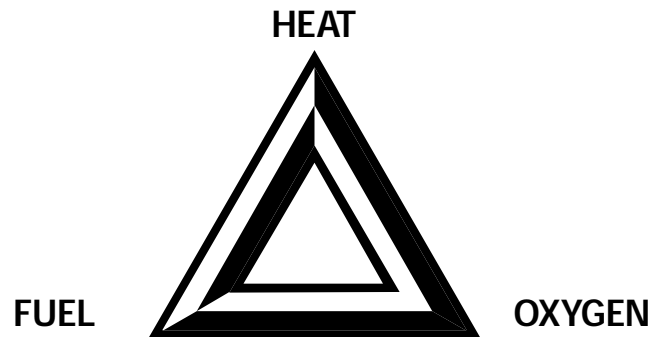
**Fuel** is any material that catches on fire easily (is *combustible*). It can be a solid, a liquid or a gas. Most solids and liquids have to turn into vapors or gas before they will burn.

O  
X  
Y  
G  
E  
N

The air we breathe is about 21% **oxygen** (O<sub>2</sub>). Fire needs air with at least 16% oxygen to keep burning.

H  
E  
A  
T

**Heat** is the energy necessary to get a fuel hot enough so that vapors are given off and a fire can start.



**Remember:** Fire needs ALL 3 of these elements to start *and* to keep burning.

# HOW FIRES ARE CLASSIFIED



## ◆ CLASS A

This includes ordinary combustibles (*things that catch on fire easily*) or fibrous material such as: wood, paper, cloth, rubber, some plastics and wastebaskets.



## ◆ CLASS B

This includes flammable or combustible liquids such as gasoline, kerosene, paint, paint thinners and propane.



## • CLASS C

This includes energized electrical equipment, such as appliances, switches, panel boxes and power tools.



## PREVENTING FIRES IN THE WORKPLACE

Most fires are **preventable**. Here are some ways you can prevent fires in your workplace:

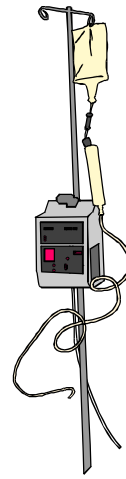
### Smoking:

- If you are a smoker, smoke only where you are allowed to. Careless handling of smoking materials is the most common cause of fatal fires in healthcare facilities. Many facilities are *smoke-free*.
- If staff or clients are allowed to smoke in your workplace, make sure you understand the smoking rules and help to enforce them. Most importantly, do not allow clients to smoke in bed.
- Look to see if the smoking rules are posted. Remember that those rules apply to **everyone** (clients, staff, non-facility workers, volunteers, visitors, etc).
- Remember, there is no smoking in areas where oxygen is in use or stored.
- No one should smoke wherever there are gases or flammable liquids being used. They may catch on fire. There should be no smoking signs posted in these areas.

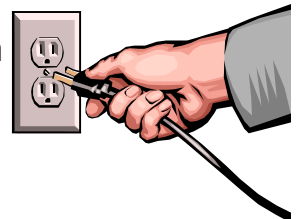
Check smoke detectors frequently to make sure they work. A good time to change the battery is when you turn the clocks back.



### Equipment



- Equipment that doesn't work or isn't used correctly is another major cause of fire in healthcare facilities. Let your supervisor know if a piece of equipment you are using needs to be fixed.
- If you cook or do laundry for your clients, be sure to clean grease or lint from cooking and laundry equipment, ventilator hoods and filters on a regular basis.
- Always be on the lookout for any cracked or split cords or plugs on electrical equipment. Report problems right away!
- Be more careful of equipment that clients may bring from home. (Please review your policies on client-owned equipment).
- Avoid using extension cords. If one must be used, **do not** run extension cords across doorways or where they can be stepped on.
- **Do not** plug one extension cord into another and **never** plug more than one extension cord into an outlet.




# FIRE SAFETY RULES TO REMEMBER




1. Smoke only where permitted. No smoking in bed.
2. Keep things that will catch on fire (*paper products, curtains, linens and clothing*) away from heat-producing devices such as stoves, radiators or reading lamps. When cooking on stoves, use the **back** burners. Turn handles of pots and pans in (but not over another burner). Turn burners off when leaving the kitchen—never leave cooking unattended.
3. Make sure pilot lights for stoves and hot water heaters are working. Report gas odors to the utility company right away and be ready to get everyone out of the home or facility.
4. Turn off electrical appliances when you are finished with them.
5. Do not allow devices that produce sparks (*motor-driven toys or appliances like razors*) in client areas where oxygen is stored.
6. Store gas cylinders securely, away from clients. Cap cylinders when they aren't in use.
7. Keep maintenance and storage areas clean and free from trash, oily rags and other hazards.
8. Keep halls and stairways clear. Don't use elevators when there is a fire. Elevator shafts spread smoke and fire.
9. Make sure you know how to activate alarms.
10. Know the location of fire extinguishers and how to operate them.
11. Never prop open emergency doors. Open the door to let someone out, then shut it again. This keeps the fire from spreading.
12. Never plug one extension cord into another.
13. Know your escape routes or fire plan.
14. Place emergency numbers near the phone.

# PREPARING FOR A FIRE.....

Every workplace should have a complete disaster recovery or preparation plan. Please check with your supervisor for your company's disaster recovery/preparation plan. Here are some things you need to know before going into a work area—*whether you work in a facility or in a client's home*:




Know the location of any fire alarms in your work area, and get training on how to operate them—even in the dark.



Know the location of portable fire extinguishers in your work area and get training on how to use them.

Know how to shut off oxygen and other piped gas systems, **if and when** you are told to do so.



Know escape routes from your work area or client's home.




Remember!  
It 's a FEDERAL LAW that escape routes must be posted by every elevator or visibly on the first floor of any workplace .



Help clients and their families prepare an evacuation plan.

- Draw a rough plan of the home noting doors and windows that can be used for escape.
- Make sure the doors and windows open easily.
- Designate one place to meet outside the home.





**1. Rescue:** Don't open doors without checking for heat. Move clients who are in immediate danger away from smoke or flames first. Smoke *kills* so bend or crawl under it. **DON'T BREATHE IT!**

- If there is a lot of smoke, cover your mouth and the client's mouth with a cloth.
- If your clothes or the client's clothes catch on fire do the following:

**STOP** right away. Running will increase the fire.



**DROP** to the floor and cover face with hands.

**ROLL** around on the floor until the fire is out.

## Don't panic!

If a fire breaks out, stay calm to set an example for your clients—and follow these RACE guidelines.

**2. Alarm:** Pull the fire alarm if you are working in a facility. Report the fire according to the facility's policies and procedures. If you are at a client's home, call the fire department. When you report the fire make sure you do the following:

- Identify yourself.
- Give the location of the fire. If you're in a healthcare facility—give the name of the facility, address, and closest intersection. If you're in a client's home—give the address and closest intersection.
- Tell the emergency operator the exact location of the fire: the room number and floor level OR the client's room: bedroom, kitchen, etc.

Notify management in the facility or building. If you're in a client's home, notify your supervisor.

**3. Confine:** Close the doors of your client(s) rooms behind you to slow the spread of smoke and flame.

**4. Extinguish:** Fight the fire **ONLY** if the fire is small and contained (such as a fire in a wastebasket or a frying pan) and **ONLY** if you have been trained to operate a portable fire extinguisher. However, before you begin to fight a small fire, make sure the area has been cleared, the fire has been reported and that you have a clear exit path for escape. (FYI: If a frying pan catches on fire, sprinkle baking soda to extinguish the fire.)



# How Do I Make Sure Clients Are Safe?

1. Remove anyone that's in serious danger first.
2. Avoid hallways that have dead ends.
3. If there is a hazard in a room, close the door to that room.
4. Move clients away from any room that's a hazard.
5. If you are with a coworker, one of you must be at the front of the group to lead and give directions. The other person must be at the rear of the group to make sure everyone is present.
6. Once everyone is safe do a head count to make sure all are present.

***To make sure an area is safe remember the following:***

- ♦ The area of safety must be known ahead of time.
- ♦ There should be different locations on each floor of your workplace.
- ♦ The area should have a window and a telephone.
- ♦ A fire extinguisher needs to be close by.

**If you find fire or smoke in a client care area...RACE**

**R = Rescue**

**A = Alarm**

**C = Confine**

**E = Extinguish**



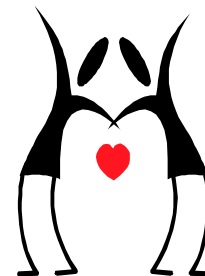
**If the fire is found in an empty room or closet...CARE**

**C = Confine**

**A = Alarm**

**R = Rescue**

**E = Evacuate**



## Let's take a few minutes to discuss FIRE EXTINGUISHERS....



There are 3 basic types of  
fire extinguishers:

Type of Extinguisher	Class of Fire	Description of Fire
<b>Water</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It might say "PCW" on the label.</li> <li>It's usually a silver-colored tank.</li> </ul>	A	Things that catch on fire easily. (wood, paper, cloth, rubber, some plastics, trash can and furniture)
<b>Carbon Dioxide</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It may say "CO2" on the label.</li> <li>These come in a red tank.</li> </ul>	B, C	Electrical & liquids that catch on fire (gasoline, kerosene, paint, paint thinners and propane)
<b>Dry Chemical</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It may say "DC" on the label.</li> <li>It will be a red tank.</li> </ul>	A, B, C	Things that catch on fire easily; electrical; liquids that catch on fire

Each extinguisher has a specific job function. The following precautions should be remembered when using fire extinguishers:

- Never use a **water** extinguisher (PCW) on **electrical** fires.
- Have someone shut off electrical power to any burning equipment.
- Never use a **CO2** extinguisher on **paper** fires (Class A). It will only blow papers around and risk spreading the fire.
- Use caution when operating a CO2 extinguisher in a small area. It could make it very difficult to breathe!
- Never replace a *used* fire extinguisher on its wall mount. **Report any used or defective extinguishers to management.**

# WHEN TO USE A FIRE EXTINGUISHER

Most fires start small. Except for explosions, fires can usually be brought under control if they are attacked within the first 2 minutes—*with the right type and size of extinguisher.*

A fire extinguisher should be “listed & labeled” by an independent testing laboratory. The higher the rating number on an A or B extinguisher, the more fire it can put out. Be careful... high-rated extinguishers are often heavier. Make sure you can hold and operate the extinguisher.



A portable fire extinguisher can save lives and property by putting out a small fire or containing it until the fire department arrives. Before attempting to fight a small fire, be sure everyone is out of the building. It is important to have someone call the fire department. If the fire starts to spread or threatens your escape path, get out immediately!

**You must know how to use an extinguisher—quickly—without taking time to read directions during an emergency. Remember that extinguishers need care and must be recharged after every use.**

# HOW TO USE A FIRE EXTINGUISHER (Just think "PASS"!)

**1. PULL** the pin. Some extinguishers require you to release a lock latch, press a puncture lever or some other motion.

**2. AIM** low, pointing the extinguisher nozzle (or its horn or hose) at the base of the fire.



**3. SQUEEZE** the handle. This releases the extinguishing agent.

**4. SWEEP** from side to side at the base of the fire until it appears to be out. Watch the fire area in case fire breaks out again. Be ready to use the extinguisher again if necessary.

## REMEMBER...

**P** = Pull the pin

**A** = Aim the nozzle at the base of the fire

**S** = Squeeze the nozzle

**S** = Sweep the stream from side to side

## NO ESCAPE ROUTE DUE TO SMOKE, HEAT OR FLAME?



1. Go to a room with a window.
2. Close the door.
3. Stuff coats, sweaters, sheets, etc. under and around the doors to keep smoke out.
4. Break a window.
5. Stay close to the bottom of the window since fresh air enters at the bottom.
6. Wave outside with a coat or sweater so someone can see you.
7. Stay calm until help arrives.



## Final Fire Safety Rules To Follow.....

- If possible, work as a *team* with someone when using a fire extinguisher.
- Remembering the **PASS** guidelines will help you operate most portable fire extinguishers. But not all! Read and follow the directions on the extinguisher in your workplace. If you have **ANY** doubt about whether or not to fight a fire—**DON'T!!** Get out and close the door behind you.
- **Remember: You must have an emergency fire plan for all of your clients. Your clients' safety is up to you!**

## WHEN NOT TO FIGHT A FIRE!!



1. If the fire could block your only exit!
2. If the fire is spreading too quickly!
3. If the type or size of the extinguisher is wrong!
4. If the fire is too large!
5. If you don't know how to use your fire extinguisher!



In the Know's Inservice Club  
presents  
A Workplace Safety Module:  
**Fire Prevention & Safety Quiz**

**Are You "In the Know" About Fire Prevention & Safety?**

**Select the word that finishes the fire prevention and safety phrase.**  
*(Hint: You won't use every word on the list.)*

Key Words:	Class A	RACE
	OSHA	Heat
	Alarms	Escape routes
	CARE	PASS
	Carbon dioxide	Paper fires
	Hazard	Oxygen
	Class C	Fuel

- To use a fire extinguisher, remember the word \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ is the energy necessary to increase the temperature of a fuel.
- Fires that burn wood, cloth, or paper are classified as \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ conducts workplace inspections to see whether employers are following their standards for fire safety.
- \_\_\_\_\_ must be posted by every elevator or visibly on the first floor of any workplace.
- If a fire is found in an empty room or closet, think of the word \_\_\_\_\_.
- Never use a \_\_\_\_\_ extinguisher on \_\_\_\_\_. It will only blow papers around and risk spreading the fire.
- You should know the location of fire \_\_\_\_\_ and extinguishers in your work area.

EMPLOYEE NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

***I understand the information presented in this inservice. I have completed this inservice and answered at least six of the test questions correctly.***

Employee Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Inservice Credit: 1 hour

Supervisor Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Self Study \_\_\_\_\_

*File completed test in employee's personnel file.* Group Study \_\_\_\_\_