

WORKING WITH

# EMERGENCY

# RESPONDERS



**TIPS FOR CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS**

What do they need to know before, during, and after an emergency?



# Fire



- No institution is immune from fire.
- Flood damage can be dried out and restored, stolen property has a chance of being recovered; damage from fire is usually permanent and irreparable.
- Fire is more cunning and less discriminating than a thief.
- It can spread through very small areas quickly.
- Cavalier attitude “fire won’t happen to me”.
- Blind faith in local fire department to save them and their property.

# Planning

- Without a plan to deal with the threat of fire, you place the buildings, occupants, visitors and collections at risk.
- Complexity of these plans may vary from simple to more complex.
- The first few minutes in a fire incident is critical.
- Planning, training, and automatic fire protection systems are key ingredients to protection.
- Should have an emergency self-protection plan that spells out how to report a fire and safely evacuate the premises.



# Life Safety



- Life must always be priority number one.
- Instruct employees on how to turn in an alarm:
  - Make sure they know what the building fire alarm sounds like.
  - Ensure employees can hear the alarm.
  - Ensure all employees know their primary and secondary exit routes.
  - Exit doors are accessible, unlocked and not blocked.
  - Exit signs are operating and visible.
  - Emergency lights are functional and adequate.
  - Ensure the staff knows where the meeting point is outside the building.



## FIRE PREVENTION

- Most important factor in preventing a fire loss is maintenance.
- The fire protection policy needs to be in writing and updated periodically.
- Management and staff responsibilities need to be defined and fire prevention procedures established.
- This program needs to be based on a high standard.



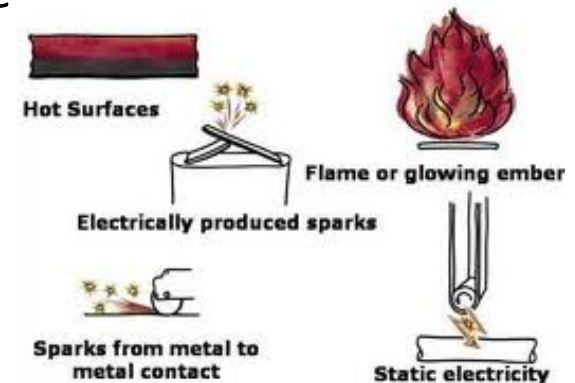
# Expectations of Fire Department

- Understand fire departments seldom respond to your types of property.
- How fast can they get to your location?
- What is the ISO rating of your fire department?
- Has the fire department pre-planned your facility?
- Have you shared your emergency plan?
- Does the fire department know what is valuable?
- Have you collectively discussed what is needed to protect your valuables?
- Does the fire department need special equipment or additional personnel to best protect your valuables?



# Safeguarding Ignition Sources

- Much can be done to minimize chance of a fire starting or spreading with little, or no expenditure of monies.
- Your elementary school training taught you that it takes fuel, air and heat for a fire to occur.
- You can't do much about air, but you can control both the fuel and ignition sources in your facilities.
- Leading causes of fire include heating devices, cooking, electrical wiring, appliances and smoking.



# Reducing the Likelihood of Fire

- Welding, cutting and burning.
- Fuel fired portable heaters should be prohibited.
- Electrical appliances should be restricted and kept away from combustibles.
- Heating, air conditioning and other mechanical equipment should be installed by professionals in compliance with codes.
- Electrical wiring should be installed in strict accordance with code.
- Consider installing arc-fault circuit interrupters on your electrical circuits.
- Lightning protection should be checked by an expert to ensure that it is adequate, in good repair and properly grounded.





# Safeguarding Fuel Sources

- Safe containers should be used for collecting waste papers, oily rags, and other refuse including packing materials.
- Store important papers or collections in fire resistive safes.
- Hallways, stairways and access aisles must be kept clear of all storage.
- Storage should be prohibited in mechanical equipment rooms, electrical closets and within 3 feet of the front of electrical panels.
- Exhibits , interior/exterior modifications, should be constructed of fire safe materials to reduce the fire risk. Use fire retardant material.
- Treat combustible materials with a fire retardant chemical or paint reduce the chance of ignition.

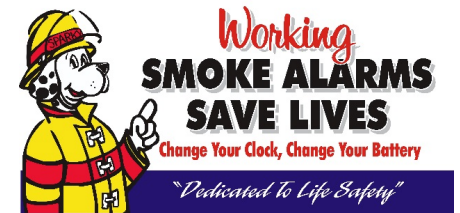


# Passive Fire Protection Measures

- Proper disaster planning should consider all active fire systems failing.
- Consider how you can further incorporate vertical and horizontal barriers to resist fire spread. Maintain their integrity.
- Fire doors protect opening in fire walls and should not be propped open, that they positively latch and they close without assistance.
- Make sure penetrations for duct work, electrical wiring and plumbing in fire-rated walls, floors and ceilings are sealed.
- Placement of collections into enclosed cabinets and containers is a form of compartmentation that is highly desirable.

# Fire Detection Systems

- Historical buildings often present unique fire detection and suppression issues.
- What is the purpose of the fire detection system?
  - Strictly life safety (local alarm)
  - Sound an alarm and summon trained personnel
- Heat detectors – slow to react due to the need for heat buildup.
- Smoke detectors – best early detection of fire; placement is key
- Photoelectric detectors – provide special coverage; not for every facility.



# Fire Suppression Systems

- Portable fire extinguishers
  - Requires human reaction and risks
- Fire sprinkler systems
  - Wet, dry and pre-action systems
  - Not just building protection but designed for life safety
  - Proven reliability
  - Reduce water damage resulting from fire fighting operations
- Gaseous fire suppression systems
  - Clean agent
  - Need enclosed area
  - Limited amount of agent
  - Require regular maintenance
  - Do not protect the building structure



## Summary:

- Evaluating your facility needs is very important.
- Developing an emergency plan, training employees and working with the local fire department is key to prevention and actions in case of an emergency situation.
- Identifying valuables and how to protect them should be a part of every emergency plan. Simply thinking someone will remove items from the facility may not be feasible or warranted.



*That's all Folks!*

