

## news & notes

### FIRE PREVENTION TIPS

#### Housekeeping

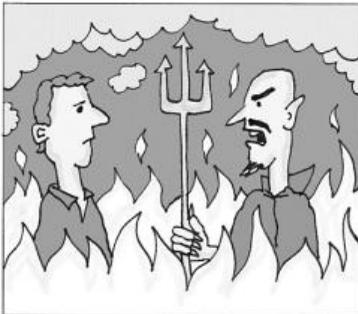
- Keep work areas free of dust and lint; put waste in proper containers.
- Keep combustible materials (e.g., paper) away from heat and machines.

#### Electricity

- Replace cords and wires that are frayed or have worn insulation.
- Don't overload circuits, motors, fuses, or outlets.
- Make sure you have good ground connections.
- Don't let heating equipment or machinery run overnight if unattended.
- Keep machines and motors clear of dust and grease. Keep bearings lubricated.

#### Fuel and Ignition Sources

- Smoke only where permitted.
- Use space heaters only in well-ventilated areas where they can't fall over.
- Perform welding and cutting in protected areas.
- Use chemical label and SDS information to keep incompatible substances away from each other.



"There is no fire exit.  
That's kind of the point."

# EMPLOYEE SAFETY NEWSLETTER

**WMMIC - Strength in Members**  
**March 2015**

## Fight fires before they start

*Take precautions to prevent common causes*

Each year, fire erupts at approximately 70,000 U.S. workplaces, killing 200 employees, injuring thousands, and causing billions of dollars in property damage. Most workplace fires are the result of human behavior rather than equipment failure. Maine Municipal Association's Risk Management Services lists these common workplace fire hazards and prevention controls.

**Heating equipment**, such as improperly installed, operated, or maintained furnaces. Every furnace or heater has minimum clearance distances on all sides and above; keep material and building components away from this area. Never store combustible material in furnace rooms.

**Electrical**. Misused, overloaded, damaged, or improperly maintained electrical equipment is a common cause of workplace fires. Do not leave cords coiled up when plugged in. Only use extension cords for temporary power for equipment in use at the moment. Use multiple outlet strips for computer equipment, not for appliances or other electric equipment. Avoid overloading circuits.

**Cooking equipment**. Microwaves, coffeemakers, and stoves can cause fires if they are misused. Make sure all break room equipment is equipped with smoke detectors. Never leave cooking unattended, and follow microwave popcorn instructions.

**Mechanical friction**. Improperly maintained or cleaned mechanical equipment can lead to a fire. Keep bearings properly lubricated and aligned. And keep conveyors and mobile equipment cleaned and free of accumulations of combustible material.

**Housekeeping**. Poor housekeeping practices are a common cause of fire. Avoid excessive storage of boxes and other combustible material. Make sure stored material never blocks exits, walkways, electrical panels, or emergency equipment.

**Proximity hazards**. Watch out for hazards outside of buildings, such as other buildings within 100 feet of your site. Other hazards include nearby fuel tanks, Dumpsters, and weeds, grass, and brush.

**Smoking**. Unauthorized smoking or poor setup of smoking areas can put everyone at risk for fire.

**Special hazards**, such as cutting/welding and other hot work that can produce flames, slag, or sparks. Other special hazards include flammable liquid storage and handling; spontaneous combustion from oily rags, chemicals, hay, and leaves; commercial cooking equipment; and LPG and natural gas.

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### **MOST COSTLY INJURIES**

Researchers for Liberty Mutual's *2014 Workplace Safety Index* used information from the insurer's workers' compensation claims, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the National Academy of Social Insurance to determine which injuries caused an employee to be out of work for 6 or more days and ranked those events by total workers' compensation costs.

Here are the leading injury causes and associated costs.

1. Overexertion: \$15.1 billion
2. Falls on same level: \$9.19 billion
3. Struck by object or equipment: \$5.3 billion
4. Falls to lower level: \$5.12 billion
5. Other exertions or bodily reactions: \$4.2 billion
6. Roadway incidents involving motorized land vehicles: \$3.18 billion
7. Slip or trip without fall: \$2.17 billion
8. Caught in/compressed by equipment or objects: \$2.1 billion
9. Repetitive motion involving micro-tasks: \$1.84 billion
10. Struck against object or equipment: \$1.76 billion



## **Social media verification**

### *Know how to check government accounts*

According to [www.USA.gov](http://www.USA.gov), the federal government uses social media tools such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube to communicate official information. However, it is important to determine if a social media account is legitimately managed by the federal government when viewing various posts online.

Therefore, the federal government has developed a tool allowing verification of the social media accounts it manages.

In an interview with FederalNewsRadio's Michael O'Connell, Justin Herman, social media lead for the Office of Citizen Services and Innovative Technologies at the General Services Administration, said that during Hurricane Sandy, some media sites were distributing incorrect or false information. But it is now easy for the public to verify social media platforms using the federal Social Media Registry tool.

The tool allows searches by agencies, elected officials, heads of agencies, or Cabinet members.

To verify the legitimacy of a federal website, go to [www.usa.gov/Contact/verify-social-media.shtml](http://www.usa.gov/Contact/verify-social-media.shtml).

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## **The 'eyes' have it**

### *Take care of your eyes*

March is **Workplace Eye Wellness Month**. Follow these wellness tips from Prevent Blindness America (PBA - [www.preventblindness.org](http://www.preventblindness.org)) Vision Learning Center:

1. **Don't smoke.** Not smoking—or quitting smoking—can lower people's risk for eye problems, including age-related macular degeneration (AMD), cataracts, and glaucoma. Not smoking can also reduce the risk of getting diabetes-related eye problems.
2. **Eat a healthy diet.** Studies have shown that zinc, vitamins C and E, and beta-carotene can reduce the risk for AMD. Check with your doctor before adding vitamins to your diet. Other studies report that dark green vegetables, such as spinach and kale, may also reduce the risk of getting AMD. Furthermore, healthy eating can lower the risk of developing diabetes, which is a risk factor for developing glaucoma.
3. **Live an active lifestyle.** Regular exercise and activity promotes overall good health and keeps people from developing conditions that can lead to eye disease, such as diabetes. Again, consult with your doctor before starting exercise programs.
4. **Manage blood pressure.** High blood pressure can increase the risk for glaucoma. And for those with diabetes, high blood pressure increases the risk for diabetes-related eye problems.
5. **Protect your eyes from the sun.** PBA recommends wearing a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses that absorb 99 percent to 100 percent of ultraviolet (UV) rays, both UV-A and UV-B rays.