

"Don't Be the Toast of Your Town" - Fire Prevention

How devastating would it be to your community if your business burned to the ground? How many employees would lose their jobs? Where would your customers go, and how long would it take to get them back? These are reality questions should a significant company building burned to the ground. Having property insurance is good, but fire prevention is best.

There are several things prudent business owners can do to reduce the risk of a fiery business interruption. First, insure the company property is adequately equipped with fire protection systems - alarms, sprinklers, and fire extinguishers. Once installed, these systems must be properly maintained. Annually, by a specialist; monthly/weekly/daily by properly trained employees.

Next, be a stickler for good housekeeping. Allow employees adequate time to police their work areas and hold them accountable. Here again, proper training will be the key. And speaking of employee training, make sure they know where the approved smoking areas are. Those sparking butts combined with litter or oily rags can generate a blaze pronto.

Another key area of fire prevention is proper use and proper maintenance of the electrical system and company equipment. A certified electrician should bless the company electrical systems periodically. He should test for overloaded circuits and visually electrical components for problems. And again, employees should be properly trained to do their part -making sure extension cords and tools are used properly, ground pins are in place, and that any electrical arcing problems are reported for immediate repair.

Oh, and there is the infrequent use of the welding machine and cutting torches. Are we using a buddy system so that we have a fire watchman while cutting or welding is taking place? Are workers insuring there are no flammable or combustible materials in the area prior to and after the work activity? Do we check the work area thoroughly at least 30 minutes after the work activity to insure there are no smoldering items that could generate a flame after everyone has gone home for the day?

This is fire prevention food for thought. It may help your business avoid being toasted.