

Smoke and CO alarms

Did you know that you should test your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide (CO) alarm once a month and replace the battery at least once a year? If your alarm is making a chirping noise, replace the battery immediately.

You should replace your smoke alarm every 10 years and replace your CO alarm according to the manufacturer's instructions. Interconnect your smoke alarms and your CO alarms if possible so that if one goes off, the others do, too.

Here are some more facts from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) about smoke alarms and CO alarms.

Smoke alarms. Smoke alarms should be placed in every bedroom and in each common area of your house.

Place them at least 10 feet from the stove to reduce false alarms and less than 12 inches from the ceiling and away from windows, doors and ducts.

CO alarms. CO alarms should be installed in a central location outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home.

Choose a CO alarm that has a label of a recognized testing laboratory. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for placement and mounting height.

If either of your alarms sound, get outside and stay outside. Make sure everyone is accounted for.



"No, the fire drill didn't go all right. Same as last time, they all just stampeded."



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Emergency preparedness

What to do in a fire drill

Fires can happen anywhere. Fire drills are a big part of being safe at work. They prepare you for what you need to do in case of a fire. Knowing what to do is the key to surviving a fire emergency. Having regular fire drills will give you the confidence you need to escape a fire safely.

Fire drills may not seem necessary precautions for adults in a professional workplace. However, in the face of an emergency situation, many employees do not respond quickly to fire alarms. Even managers may not know the best action in an emergency. Therefore, training you on fire drill procedures is the best way to make sure you remain safe in dangerous situations.

Where should you go?

Your workplace will have a designated meeting place outside the building where everyone will meet. You need to go the meeting place so that your supervisor can count heads to make sure everyone is there.

Next, you need to know the location of at least two exits. Review our building's floor plan to see where the closest exits are. Emergency evacuation routes will be:

- Clearly marked and well lit;
- Wide enough to accommodate all the employees evacuating;
- Unobstructed and clear of debris at all times; *and*
- Unlikely to expose those evacuating to even more hazards.

Your supervisor will appoint someone to be in charge of making sure all people in their area are accounted for during the drill.

During the fire drill

In order to stay safe and avoid confusion, you must know what to do during the fire drill. The following are steps for what to do during the drill.

- When the fire alarm sounds, you must immediately evacuate the building in an orderly manner to prevent confusion and minimize panic or injury.
- If the alarm stops, continue to evacuate.
- If it is safe to do so, assist anyone who needs assistance with evacuating.
- Always use the stairs during a fire drill. Do not use the elevator.
- Do not push your way out an exit.
- An employee appointed by your supervisor will make sure everyone has evacuated.
- Go directly to the meeting place so that you can be counted.
- When the drill is completed, the emergency coordinator will give the "all clear" call and signal for workers to return to the building and resume operations.

Scheduled fire drills will help you have the knowledge to safely escape a fire without injuring yourself or others.

Basic disaster supply kit

Hurricane season is just around the corner. If bad weather strikes your workplace or home, do you have a basic disaster supply kit ready?

Ask your supervisor if there is a disaster supply kit and where it is located. It may be located in a shelter location at your workplace. Whether at work or at home, your disaster supply kit could include the following:

- Water—one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- Food—at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert
- Flashlight
- First aid kit
- Extra batteries
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Manual can opener for food
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers and a backup battery

Visit ready.gov, the Official website of the Department of Homeland Security, to find more information on preparing for disasters.



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Emergency preparedness: Quiz

Choose the correct response to the following statements.

1. There's nowhere you need to go after you evacuate during a fire drill. **True or False**
2. Evacuation routes will be clearly marked and well-lit. **True or False**
3. Which of the following should you not do during a fire drill?
 - A. Go directly to the meeting place to be counted
 - B. Use the elevator to get out quickly
 - C. Continue to evacuate if the alarm stops
4. During the drill, there will be no one to help you evacuate. **True or False**
5. You should not return to the building after the fire drill. **True or False**

Answers

1. False. You must go to the designated meeting area outside the building where everyone will meet after leaving the building. **2. True.** Laws provide that the exit routes from your building be well-lit and clearly marked. It should not be difficult for you to locate the evacuation route. **3. B. Use the elevator to get out quickly.** Do not use the elevator! Take the stairs during a fire drill and during real emergency situations. You should continue to evacuate the building even if the alarm stops sounding and go to the meeting place to be counted outside the building. **4. False.** Your employer will appoint an employee to make sure everyone evacuates the building safely. **5. False.** Your emergency coordinator will give the "all clear" to return to the building and resume normal operations.

National Electrical Safety Month

May is National Electrical Safety Month, an observance established by the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI), a non-profit organization that promotes electrical safety in the home, schools, and the workplace. According to ESFI, though electrical hazards may not be the leading cause of on-the-job injuries and accidents, electrical hazards are disproportionately fatal.

Always use caution when working near electricity. The following are tips from OSHA to help you avoid electrical hazards.

- Never assume that a wire is safe to touch even if the wire is down or appears to be insulated.
- Do not touch a fallen power line.
- During cleanup and other activities, stay at least 10 feet away from overhead wires. If you are working from heights or are handling long objects, survey the area for overhead wires before starting work.
- Stay inside your vehicle if an overhead wire falls across your vehicle when you are driving. If the engine stalls, do not get out of your vehicle! Call emergency services and the local electricity company.
- Do not operate electrical equipment while standing in water.
- Unless you are qualified or authorized to do so, do not repair electrical cords or equipment.
- If your electrical equipment has gotten wet, have a qualified electrician inspect it before energizing it.
- Inspect electric cords and equipment to ensure that they are in good condition and use a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) if you are working in a damp location.