

Texas Tech University

Fire and Life Safety Program



Texas Tech University Fire Marshal's Office

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Introduction

Purpose

Texas Tech University Fire Marshal's Office offers this program as an information resource to help both individual employees and departments within the university community create and maintain a safer environment. This program will empower employees to take appropriate action to ensure their own safety, the safety of co-workers, students, and visitors in the event of an emergency. This program was developed to support TTUFMO's mission of helping individuals and departments to prevent incidents and achieve compliance with all state and federal regulations and university policies. Finally, this program directly supports Texas Tech's mission to establish and maintain a safe living, learning and working environment.

Scope

The Fire and Life Safety Program contains policies and procedures, when implemented and maintained, will satisfy the code and legal obligations of Texas Tech. This program will also help prevent loss of life, reduce injury, and property damage due to fire or other emergency.

Responsibilities

The safety of university students, employees, and visitors to our campus is of paramount importance to everyone working and learning at the university. It directly impacts both the quality and value of the university. The concern the university displays for its students, employees, and visitors mirrors the character and strength of Texas Tech's commitment to its academic mission. Each employee and every department is expected to perform work in a safe manner and in compliance with regulatory requirements.

Employer

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires employers to provide each employee "a place of employment which is free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm". All employees – including managers and supervisors – play a role in helping the university meet this general duty obligation. In accordance with part of the university's mission--to provide a safe and healthy living, learning, and working environment for employees, students, and visitors--the Physical Plant Department, Housing and Dining Services, and Texas Tech Fire Marshal's Office all strive to obtain the highest level of safety that can reasonably be achieved.

Supervisors

Departments are expected to maintain safe and healthy living, learning, and working environments for faculty, staff, students, and visitors to our campus. Supervisors must implement the requirements of this program to assure compliance with applicable codes, regulations, and policies. They must also be aware of applicable training requirements necessary under OSHA programs or the fire code. Supervisors should periodically inspect and/or coordinate the inspection of all workplaces to identify hazards. TTUFMO will assist supervisors with finding solutions for eliminating identified hazards. This responsibility will fall to the highest supervisory level of each departmental unit unless otherwise specified.

Employees and Students

Staff, faculty, students and visitors play an important part in assuring safety: they must do what they can to protect themselves and others within the university community and respond appropriately to emergencies. Employees must avail themselves of information pertaining to the safe conduct of their work, regardless of the setting. Students must also participate in fire and life safety programs and respect the safety of others and their own safety. TTUFMO offers fire safety training programs for both the employee and student.

Contractors

Contractors working at the university are expected to observe and abide by state and federal codes and regulations as well as policies and procedures established for the university community.

Emergency Planning and Preparedness

Responding to a Fire Emergency

If a fire emergency occurs, all persons at Texas Tech have a responsibility to take immediate and appropriate action to take care of themselves. For those buildings that do not have a fire alarm, you may notify other occupants by knocking on doors and shouting “fire” as you exit the building. Do not jeopardize your own safety to do this. The Emergency Response Plan will be activated and all personnel must evacuate the building. (To see if your building is equipped with an automatic fire alarm and/or a fire suppression system – sprinklers, contact the Fire Marshal’s Office at 742-0145)

There is no employer expectation for employees to attempt to extinguish a fire or otherwise stay in their workplace for any reason upon being notified of a fire emergency.

IF THERE IS A FIRE SOUND THE ALARM

If you discover or suspect a fire, sound the building fire alarm.

If there is no fire alarm in the building, notify other occupants by knocking on doors and shouting
“FIRE”
as you leave the building.

LEAVE THE BUILDING

Move away from the building at least 200 feet away, out of the way of the fire department.

CALL THE FIRE/POLICE DEPARTMENT

Dial 9-911 from campus phones

Dial 911 from all other phones.

Don’t go back into the building until the fire or police department give the “**all clear**”.

Emergency Action Planning (EAP)

No one expects an emergency or disaster to affect him or her—or the work area. Yet the simple truth is that emergencies and disasters can strike anyone, anytime and anywhere. A workplace emergency is an unforeseen situation that: threatens students, staff, faculty and visitors; disrupts or shuts down part or all of the university community; or causes physical or environmental damage. Emergencies may be natural or manmade and include the following:

An emergency action plan details the actions employers and employees must take to ensure employee safety from fire and other emergencies. Your departmental Emergency Action Plan should be comprehensive and address all issues specific to you and your department that may arise during an emergency, as well as the conditions of your worksite (e.g., are there extraordinary hazards present, does your building have a fire alarm system, etc.)

For more information on developing an Emergency Action Plan contact the Texas Tech University Office of Emergency Management at 806-742-0157.

Fire and other Emergency Drills

Once you have reviewed your emergency action plan with your employees and everyone has had the proper emergency response training as stated in the previous section, it is a good idea to hold practice drills as often as necessary to keep employees prepared. The TTUFMO can assist you with drills and involve agencies such as the fire and police departments.

Fire drills are a vital part of a comprehensive campus fire safety program. Drills are held to familiarize occupants with drill procedures and to make the drill a matter of established routine.

- Fire drills are semi annually for all daycare facilities.
- Fire drills must be conducted three times per semester in residential housing facilities.
- For all other occupancies it is recommended at least one fire drill be conducted annually.

If a fire alarm sounds and you have not been notified prior to the alarm that it is a drill, take immediate action, evacuate the building and protect yourself.

TTUFMO offers assistance with training and conducting fire and other emergency drills. As part of Texas Tech's Emergency Action Plan, training exercises and drills will be conducted each year to practice the plan. These exercises will include tabletop simulations, small-scale scenarios (with only Texas Tech personnel involved), and full-scale exercises that may include outside emergency response services, such as the City of Lubbock. All exercises will be planned well in advance and the Office of Communication and Marketing will issue information regarding the exercise.

Fire Prevention

Fire prevention starts with identifying fire hazards. All members of the university community – faculty, staff, students and visitors – have a personal obligation to be aware of fire hazards and to reduce or eliminate the risk of fire on our campus.

Elements of Fire Prevention Planning

Develop a list of all major fire hazards

- Assure proper handling and storage procedures for hazardous materials.
- Identify potential ignition sources and the means used to control them.
- Develop a list of fire protection equipment necessary to control each major hazard.
- Establish procedures to control the accumulation of flammable and combustible waste materials.
- Establish procedures for regular inspection and maintenance of safeguards installed on heat-producing equipment to prevent accidental ignition of combustible materials.
- Identify by name or job title employees responsible for control of fuel source hazards.

In addition, the department must communicate certain information to employees, which includes:

- Informing each employee of the fire hazard(s) to which he or she is exposed.
- Review with employees, when they are initially assigned to a job, those parts of the fire prevention plan that are necessary for employees to protect themselves from potential fire hazards.
- Review the fire prevention plan again with any employee that is reassigned to a new job with different hazards.
- Review the plan with all employees any time a change is made to the plan.
- Review the plan with all new hires.

Identifying Common Fire Hazards

The following is a list of common fire hazards that may be in your workplace.

Scrap, waste materials, dust and trash

When these items are allowed to accumulate, the risk of fire is increased. Under the right conditions, the buildup of dust from wood, plastic or certain metal operations can lead to a fire or explosion.

Unsafe use, storage, dispensing or disposal of flammable materials

Flammable materials can be a prime source of fire and explosion.

Use of extension cords and multiple plug adapters

Extension cords and multiple plug adapters may only be used for temporary operations. Overloaded circuits damaged wiring and defective switches and outlets can all lead to electrical fires. Each power strip must be plugged directly into the wall.

Hot work hazards

Any operation involving heated materials or open flames presents a fire hazard. The University follows guidelines established by FM Global Hot Work Permit Program.

Inadequate machine and equipment maintenance

Machines that are not lubricated properly can overheat and start a fire. Electrical problems and equipment defects can lead to a fire. Routine inspection and maintenance of all machines and equipment can prevent fire hazards.

Careless smoking

Smoking is prohibited in facilities owned or leased by the university. Outdoors, discarded smoking materials carelessly tossed in waste containers or into landscaping can easily start a fire. Use approved waste containers to discard smoking materials.

Electric space heaters

There is a campus policy that prohibits the use of electric space heaters.

Materials that spontaneously combust

Oily rags or other materials soaked in oil can start a fire by themselves if placed in areas where the air does not circulate.

Basic Fire Prevention Strategies

After identifying the hazards in your area, take action to eliminate or control these hazards and prevent fires.

Housekeeping

Accumulation of combustible materials

The accumulation of combustible materials (such as cardboard boxes, magazine/journals and paper products) is prohibited. Combustible material must never be stored any closer than 36" from a heating appliance or electrical light. Properly dispose of those items no longer in use to avoid stacking and accumulation on counters, top of cabinets and desks.

Storage

Store materials in such a way that they will not obstruct the fire suppression sprinkler heads. Make sure items are 18 inches away from the ceiling if the room or area is protected by a fire suppression system (sprinklers) and 24 inches from the ceiling if there is no fire suppression system. Exceptions are allowed for attached wall shelving unless located directly under a sprinkler head. If wall shelving is located directly under sprinkler head you must maintain the 18" clearance.

Decorations

Decorations, signs and other items cannot be hung on or near the sprinkler head.

Obstructing Portable Fire Extinguishers

Do not obstruct access to portable fire extinguishers. They must be clearly visible with notification signs displayed.

Blocking Fire Doors

Assure the fire doors are unobstructed and operate freely. Never block fire doors in the open position with wedges or stoppers. These doors are to remain closed to reduce fire and smoke spread through the rest of the building.

Flammable and Combustible Liquids

Storage and handling of flammable and combustible liquids shall not exceed the allowable quantities listed in NFPA 30, NFPA 45, and in the Texas Tech University Chemical Hygiene Safety Plan. Contact Texas Tech University Environmental Health and Safety for more information at 742-3876.

Open Flames and Burning Permits

Open burning is defined as any open/exposed flame, whether indoors or outdoors, that could cause a fire. Examples are candles, incense, bonfires, campfires, leaf burning, artwork involving flames, and pyrotechnics of any kind.

Open burning on any Texas Tech property must be approved in writing by the Texas Tech University Fire Marshal's Office. All Pyrotechnic displays must meet the requirements of the State Fire Marshal's Office, NFPA, and be approved by the Texas Tech Fire Marshal's Office.

Fire Inspections

Inspections are conducted by the Texas Tech Fire Marshal's Office in university facilities for compliance with applicable NFPA codes and the International Fire Code. The Texas Tech Fire Marshal's Office is the designated Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) for all fire and life safety matters on Texas Tech University property.

Fire and Life Safety Training

The Texas Tech Fire Marshal's Office works in conjunction with the Office of Emergency Management to provide fire safety awareness training to all students, faculty, and staff.