

Texas Tech University

Fire and Life Safety Program



Texas Tech University Fire Marshal's Office

P.O. Box 43041, Lubbock, Texas 79409

806-742-0146

Fire.Safety@ttu.edu

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 department are expected to perform work in a legal and safe manner.

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 legal 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-- Texas Tech Operations, 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

All departments are expected to maintain safe and healthy living, learning, and working environments for faculty, staff, students, and visitors on our campus. Supervisors must implement the requirements of this program to ensure compliance with applicable laws and policies. They must also be aware of the applicable training requirements necessary under OSHA programs and/or the fire code. Supervisors should periodically inspect and/or coordinate the inspection of all workplaces to identify and mitigate 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

Faculty, staff, students, and visitors all play a vital role in maintaining a safe environment. Within the university community, everyone is responsible for protecting themselves, respecting the safety of others, and responding appropriately to emergencies. Employees should stay informed about safe work practices, and students are expected to participate in fire and life safety programs while taking ownership in their own safety and respecting that of others. TTUFMO offers fire safety training for both employees and students. Additionally, everyone must do their part to identify and correct unsafe conditions or behaviors. If you see something unsafe, report it.

Contractors

Contractors performing work on university property are required to comply fully with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, codes, and regulations, as well as all university policies, procedures, and safety requirements.

Emergency Planning and Preparedness

Responding to a Fire Emergency

If a fire emergency occurs, everyone at Texas Tech has a responsibility to take immediate and appropriate action to care for 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. A person should never jeopardize their own safety to alert others. The Emergency Action 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, feel free to contact the Fire Marshal’s Office at (806) 742-0146.) There is no expectation for anyone to attempt to extinguish a fire or otherwise remain 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’s 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 at least 200 feet away from the building, out of the way of the fire department.

CALL THE FIRE & POLICE DEPARTMENTS

Call 9-1-1 and do not go back into the building until first responders give the “all clear”.

Emergency Action Planning (EAP)

No one expects an emergency or disaster to impact them or their workplace, but the reality is that emergencies can happen to anyone, at any time, and in any location. A workplace emergency is an unforeseen event that may threaten the safety of students, staff, faculty, or visitors; disrupt or shut down part or all of the university community; or cause physical or environmental damage. These emergencies can be natural or manmade and may involve a wide range of incidents.

An Emergency Action Plan (EAP) outlines the steps employees and employers must take to ensure safety during fires and other emergencies. Each department's EAP should be thorough and tailored to its specific work environment. It should consider potential hazards, building features such as fire alarm systems, and any unique risks related to the department's operations.

For more information on developing an Emergency Action Plan contact the Texas Tech University Office of Emergency Management at 806-742-3940 or emergencymgmt@ttu.edu.

Fire and other Emergency Drills

Once you have reviewed your emergency action plan with your employees or coworkers 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 everyone prepared. The TTUFMO can assist you with drills and involve agencies such as the fire and police departments.

Fire drills play a crucial role in a comprehensive campus fire safety program. They help familiarize occupants with evacuation procedures and train individuals to respond effectively during an emergency.

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

If a fire alarm sounds, regardless of whether you know or believe it is a drill, it is legally required to take immediate action and evacuate the building.

TTUFMO can assist 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 annually to practice the implementation of each plan. These exercises will include tabletop simulations, small-scale scenarios (TTU personnel only), and full-scale exercises that may include outside agencies (such as Lubbock Fire Rescue, City of Lubbock, Lubbock Police Department, etc.). All exercises will be planned and advanced notice provided. For full-scale events the Office of Communication and Marketing will issue information regarding each exercise.

Fire Prevention

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

Elements of Fire Prevention Planning

Develop a list of all potential fire hazards in your environment, examples include but are not limited to:

- Ensure 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 and safety hazard(s) to which he or she is exposed.
- Review with employees, when they are hired/assigned, those parts of the fire prevention plan that are necessary to protect them from potential fire hazards.
- Review the fire prevention plan with any and all employees that are reassigned or when the hazards change.

- Review the plan with all employees any time a change is made to the plan.
- Review the plan with all newly hired employees and ensure their understanding.

Identifying Common Fire Hazards

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

- **Scrap, waste materials, refuse, trash and dust** - 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 are a prime source for fire and explosions.
- **Lithium-Ion Batteries** - Lithium-ion batteries have become ubiquitous and can pose an extreme fire hazard if damaged, improperly charged, improperly maintained, are old and/or malfunctioning. The risk is multiplied by the use and misuse of unregulated and cheaply manufactured products and devices. Lithium-ion battery fires occur suddenly, spread rapidly, produce extremely toxic smoke and are extremely hard to extinguish. For this reason, devices such as e-scooters, e-skateboards, and e-bikes are prohibited inside university facilities.
- **Use of extension cords and multi-plug adapter** - Extension cords and multiple plug adapters may only be used for temporary operations in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Overloaded circuits, damaged wiring, 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 and vaping is prohibited in all Texas Tech facilities. 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.
- **Candles & Incense** - Candles and incense are fire hazards because they involve open flames and smoldering embers that can easily ignite nearby combustible materials like curtains, bedding, paper, or furniture. Fires often occur when they're left unattended, placed on unstable surfaces, or knocked over by pets or children. For these reasons, candles and traditional flame-lit incense are prohibited on campus.
- **Electric space heaters** - Space heaters pose a fire risk because they generate intense heat in a small and usually confined area. When improperly placed, they can easily ignite nearby combustible materials such as curtains, bedding, paper or furniture. Many fires occur when heaters are left unattended, used with extension cords, or placed too close to combustibles. Additionally, older or poorly maintained units may have faulty wiring or lack modern safety features like automatic shut-off, increasing the risk of fire.
- **Materials that spontaneously combust** - Oily rags or other materials soaked in petroleum based products can start a fire by themselves if placed in areas with poor air circulation.

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 a sprinkler head, you must maintain the 18" clearance. Additionally, make sure prohibited items are not used or stored inside university buildings.
- **Decorations** - Decorations, signs and other items cannot be hung on or near the automatic fire sprinkler heads. Temporary holiday lighting must be removed after 90 days of display. It should also be of the LED variety and no more than three strands connected end-to-end. Holiday decorations must be labeled fire retardant.
- **Obstructing Portable Fire Extinguishers** - Do not obstruct access to portable fire extinguishers. They must be clearly visible with notification signs displayed.
- **Blocking Fire Doors** - Ensure 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. Never block a fire exit door from its full and instantaneous use during an emergency.

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 by calling: (806) 742-3876.

Open Flames and Burning Permits

Open burning is defined as any open/exposed flame, whether indoors or outdoors. 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 through the permitting process. All Pyrotechnic displays must meet all applicable legal requirements including but not limited to those of the State Fire Marshal's Office, state/locally adopted codes and standards, as well as be approved by the Texas Tech Fire Marshal's Office.

Fire Inspections

Inspections are conducted by the Texas Tech University Fire Marshal's Office in university facilities for compliance with applicable fire and life safety codes. 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.



For more information please visit our website:

<https://www.depts.ttu.edu/adminfinance/safety/fire-marshal/>