

Fire Safety Training and Mock Drill

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Fire is an eminent disaster at manufacturing facilities, offices, multi stories buildings, hotels, institutions and other industries. Fire is not only a threat to property damage and business interruption, but it makes environment vulnerable for people present in the premises. However, with regular training on fire safety, safe evacuation is possible.

We at Liberty General Insurance understand the importance of fire safety training and drills to eliminate life threatening environment and intent to suggest some measures to augment the same.

Overview:

Fire training is a theoretical approach to impart knowledge for risks and hazards prevailing at a facility. Whereas a fire drill is a practical approach to practice how a building would be evacuated in the event of a fire or other emergencies. In general, a drill involves of a suppositional scenario which pose threat to life and business is considered and procedures are executed to ensure emergency response for safety of occupants and to control and minimize the loss.

For the facilities where complete evacuations are not possible i.e, facility which have public access like hotels, public library, Malls, etc. Drills should be carried out by employees and target for drill should be safe evacuation of occupants.



Case Studies

A. Uphaar Fire Tragedy - Delhi, 1997:

The fire claimed the lives of 59 people and over 100 were injured due to suffocation in the ensuing stampede. Lives could have been saved had the theater was equipped with public address system, emergency lights, foot lights, exit lights. Blocked gangways and Exit aggravated the death toll.

B. Kamlamills Fire Tragedy - Mumbai, 2018:

Fire incident at roof top restaurant named "1 Above" took away life of 15 people, injuring multiple others. Major cause for such accretion in injuries was observed as narrow passage to exit and fire blocking escape route. The impact could have been lesser had the restaurant prepared with emergency evacuation via periodical fire training and mock drill.

Objective of Mock Drill

It is a human tendency that we often panic during life-threatening situations like fire. Fire training and mock drills are carried out to fulfill following objectives:

- Execution of Duties: To determine if occupants (Inc. employees, contract labors and visitors) understand and can carry out emergency duties.
- Hands-on experience: To provide the employees and contract workers with an opportunity to practice emergency procedures in a simulated but safe environment.
- Regular Evaluation: To evaluate effectiveness of evacuation procedures and necessary changes or adjustments to procedures to improve performance.

Frequency of Mock Drill

- Announced fire drills should be carried out whenever there is a change in existing process or introduction to a new process to the facility.
- Un-Announced/Surprise fire drills can be carried out on periodic intervals depending on processes hazard, possibility of natural calamity in the region, attrition rate, and work shifts.

General Tips

- Visitors should be made aware of the hazards and risks imposed and safety measures (PPEs, Escape route, walk ways etc.) by safety induction video before entering premise.
- Employees and contractors' workers should be provided with safety induction at joining and at periodic intervals. Periodicity should be adjusted based on contract terms and attrition rate.
- Each training session and drill carried out at a facility must be recorded and outcomes must be evaluated for necessary adjustments, if required.
- Fire training sessions can be concluded with quizzes for accessing the impact of knowledge imparted during the session. Encouragement can also be given to attentive participants.
- Each mock drill can be evaluated based on following points:
 - o Fire alarm activation
 - o Audibility of alarm.
 - o Audibility of voice communication system and instruction.
 - o Functionality of electro-magnetic locking devices releasing locked doors upon the fire alarm system signal.
 - o Did occupant follow assigned evacuation routes?
 - o Were corridors and stairwells clear and unobstructed?
 - o Did occupants go directly to assembly areas after evacuating the building?
- Drills can be carried out in coordination with nearest public fire brigade. Fire Marshal can also assist on use of protection and first aid apparatus.
- Most of the accidents are reported to occur during the dark hours, training in this time slot can prove to be beneficial.



Trivia

Origin of Fire Drills: In the year 1958 an accident took place at school named "Our Lady of the Angles" located at Chicago, US. During the incident, students were trapped on the second floor of the building. Many students were killed due to lack of information on escape routes. This incident led to recognition for need of fire drills. Henceforth monthly fire drills were put in place at the facility. Later on, studies revealed that these procedures educate people in understanding what leads to fire and what should be done when a fire originates.

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