Fire Identification, Notification and Emergency Evacuation

Identification/Notification

In the event that anyone smells smoke or sees fire or smoke and there is a building fire alarm system, they should immediately activate the alarm to evacuate the building. Even if the fire is known to be small, the alarm should be activated immediately. The fire could grow quickly, endangering building occupants. All building occupants should be familiar with fire alarm pull station locations.

After activating the fire alarm, the person discovering the fire should immediately call 6911, from a safe location, and provide the emergency dispatcher with the name and location of the building and information about the fire. The Campus Police Department will notify the Oceanside Fire Department.

After the alarm has been sounded and the fire has been reported, an attempt should be made to extinguish the fire if it is small and if it can be extinguished without exposing oneself to injury. Portable fire extinguishers are available for use. Otherwise, evacuate along with others and stand by to tell officials the exact location of the fire and other pertinent information.

Evacuation

The primary concern in the event of a fire is to evacuate everyone from the building as quickly as possible. In order to accomplish this, occupants must be prepared in advance for quick and orderly evacuation. Periodic meetings should be held with all personnel to explain, in detail, evacuation procedures. When the fire alarm sounds, immediate evacuation is required.

When the alarm sounds and you are in a room with a closed door, touch the door lightly with the back of your hand. If the door is HOT, do NOT open it. Stuff towels, sheets or other materials under the door to keep smoke out. Wet material works well. Next, if a window is present open between 6 to 8 inches to allow fresh air in. Keep close to the open window and drape clothing, sheet, towel, etc. outside the window sill as a distress signal to the fire department.

If you are able to exit the building, make sure you turn off any ventilating equipment, leave room lights on and close the door behind you as you leave. Once outside, move a reasonable distance away from the building and remain quiet and orderly until advised by the police or fire department officials to re-enter the building. NEVER ATTEMPT TO RE-ENTER A BURNING BUILDING.
Evacuation of Individuals with Disabilities.

When the alarm sounds and you are unable to make your way down stairs, obtain assistance from other individuals who are familiar with your disability.

If no one is able to assist you down the stairs, proceed to the stairwell or designated area of refuge and inform other evacuees that you need immediate rescue. Stairwells and designated areas of refuge are designed to provide protection from smoke and fire; however, doors to these areas must be kept closed in order to afford you this protection.

While you are waiting, position yourself so that your face is as close to the floor as possible. Smoke invades upper space first and most of the available oxygen is near the floor. If smoke becomes too dense to breathe, place clothing or some other heavy cloth over your nose and mouth to filter as much smoke as possible until help arrives. Response time for first responders to fires is less than five minutes.

Open Flames and Fireworks

Unapproved appliances of which produce exposed elements or open flames such as coleman stoves, fondue pots, candles, gas lanterns, hibachi grills, torches, oil lamps and fire works are disallowed on campus unless approved for use by the Department.

Fires can happen anywhere. A fire in a large building creates an enormous risk to everyone. Other reasons for evacuating buildings include natural gas leaks, earthquakes, hazardous material spills and storms. Knowing what to do is the key to surviving a fire emergency. Conducting regular fire drills will give you the knowledge and confidence to escape a fire safely. There are two steps for a good evacuation program - planning and practice.

Planning

Planning gives you the information you need ahead of time to evacuate safely. In the workplace, employees and supervisors should plan together for exiting their worksite. At school, involve all school staff including teachers, administrative and office workers, and the maintenance and food service staff.

Working together, design an evacuation plan to meet the specific needs of your building and your occupants. Make the plan clear and concise. Review the plan and walk through the exit procedure to make sure that everyone knows what to do.
Each building, whether it be a school, workplace or multi-family living unit, should have a posted exit diagram (plan) and everyone should be familiar with it.

Be sure that smoke detectors are installed and maintained. Know the sound of the fire alarm. Everyone should recognize and respond to the sound of the smoke detector or other fire alarm immediately. Immediate response is vital for a quick, orderly evacuation.

Everyone should exit in an orderly manner to prevent confusion and minimize panic or injury. No one should push their way out an exit. Single file lines are best in controlling traffic to the exits.

Consider individuals with special needs. When developing your escape plan, remember that individuals who are younger, older or disabled may need special assistance. Anyone with special needs should be located as close to an exit as possible. Train others to give special assistance with evacuation.

Be sure to know two ways out. There should be two ways out of every area of the home, school, or workplace. If the primary exit is blocked by smoke or fire, use your second exit. Point out all emergency exits as you walk through the emergency procedure.

Always use the stairways to exit multi-story buildings. Do not use an elevator. An elevator may stop between floors, or go to the fire floor and stop with the doors open.

If a room or corridor is filled with smoke, crawl low on your hands and knees to exit. The cleaner air is closer to the ground.

Plan your meeting place. A designated meeting place outside the building is a vital part of an evacuation plan. Count heads. Be aware of who is there (hopefully everybody will be accounted for) and who is not there. When the fire department arrives, you can report if there is anyone missing.

Know what to do if you can't escape. You'll need to plan your actions in case immediate escape is impossible. If possible, for example, stay in a room with an outside window and always close doors between you and the fire. Think about what you could use - sheets, towels, curtains, or even large pieces of clothing - to stuff around cracks near the door and wave as a signal to rescuers. Know how to open the window to ventilate smoke, but be prepared to close the window immediately if an open window makes the room smokier. If there is a phone, call the fire department with your location, even if firefighters are already on the scene. Remember, stay low in smoke until you're rescued.
Practice

After planning, practice to make sure that everyone knows what to do. Have fire drills. Practice your fire escape periodically throughout the year. Remember, the element of surprise simulates a real fire and adds essential realism to your fire drill program.

Appoint someone to monitor the drill. This person will sound the alarm and make the drill realistic by requiring participants to use their second way out or to crawl low. This could be done by having someone hold up a sign reading "smoke" or "exit blocked by fire." The monitor also will measure how long complete evacuation takes.

After the evacuation, take a head count at the designated meeting place(s) to account for everyone's participation and safe evacuation.

When everyone is back inside the building after the drill, gather everyone together to discuss any questions or problems that occurred during the drill. Redesign the drill procedures as needed. Make the next fire drill even more effective. Remember, once you are outside, stay outside. Don't go back in until the proper authorities say it is okay.

Evacuation Plan & Drills For Fires, Chemical Emergencies, & Disasters

Each child care facility should have a written plan for evacuation in the event of fire. The plan should be posted in a visible area. You should also write up procedures for a chemical emergency (spill or accidental release) and make sure you are familiar with your city’s (or county’s) Community Response Plan, available from your fire department, Local Emergency Planning Committee, or State Emergency Response Commission. Each facility, as appropriate for its geographic area, should also have an evacuation plan for blizzard, earthquake, flood, hurricane, tornado, power failure, or other disasters that could create structural damages to the facility or pose health hazards. You should practice drills for fire (and for tornadoes in areas where they occur) every month. Drills for hurricanes and earthquakes should be practiced every 6 months or annually in areas in which they are likely to occur. Keep a record of your practice drills.