Fire safety toolbox talk

Fire and electricity · about 5 minutes · read it out, or say it in your own words

SITE OR JOB	DATE	PRESENTER

A building site is full of things that burn: offcuts, cardboard, plastic wrap, paint, thinners, diesel and gas. A small fire in a skip or a store can spread to stock, site huts and neighbouring houses within minutes, and the people most at risk are the ones who do not know where the extinguisher is or where to go when the siren sounds.

SAY THIS

Fire needs three things

Every fire needs heat, fuel and air. On our site the fuel is all around us: timber offcuts, packaging, paint tins, thinners, diesel and gas. The heat comes from grinders, welding, cigarettes, faulty leads and even a hot exhaust parked on dry grass. Take away one of the three and you cannot have a fire. Most of our work today is about keeping fuel away from heat.

Keep the fuel under control

Rubbish and offcuts go into the skip, not into piles behind the building. Paint, thinners and fuel stay in the flammable store with the lids closed. Take out only what you need for today and put the rest back. Oily rags never go in with flammable liquids. Do not smoke anywhere near the store, the gas cylinders or fresh paint. Smoke only at the place the supervisor has set aside.

Know your extinguisher

Look around now and find the nearest extinguisher to where you work. A competent person checks them, but you are our eyes every day. If one is missing, has a broken seal, or has been used even for a second, tell me so it can be refilled. Different extinguishers are made for different fires, so read the label. Never throw water on an electrical fire or on burning fuel or oil.

Only fight a small fire

Only tackle a fire if it is small, you have been shown how, and you have a clear way out behind you. Pull the pin, aim at the bottom of the flames, squeeze the handle and sweep from side to side. If the fire keeps growing or the smoke gets thick, stop, get out and close the door behind you if you can. A building can be rebuilt. You cannot.

When the siren goes

Shout 'fire' and sound the siren. Stop work, switch off machines and gas if it is safe to do so, and walk to the assembly point. Do not go back for tools or phones. At the assembly point we count everyone, so never leave without telling your supervisor, or someone may go back inside to look for you. The fire brigade number is on the notice board. Learn where it is.

CHECK ON SITE TODAY

- [ ] Point out the nearest fire extinguisher to each work area and check its seal, gauge and inspection tag.
- [ ] Walk the escape routes and clear anything blocking them, including stacked material and leads.
- [ ] Check that the flammable store is closed, signed and has no-smoking notices at the entrance.
- [ ] Look for piles of offcuts, packaging or oily rags and get them into the skip or a safe place.
- [ ] Show the crew the assembly point and the siren, and make sure the fire brigade number is posted.
- [ ] Ask who on site has been trained to use an extinguisher, and make sure every shift has someone.

ASK THE CREW

- ? Where is the nearest extinguisher to the place you are working today?
- ? What on this site would burn fastest if it caught alight?
- ? If a fire started in the store while you were next to it, what would you do first?
- ? Have you ever seen a fire start on a site? What caused it?

PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR THIS JOB

Normal site PPE: hard hat, safety boots and high-visibility vest · No one should fight a fire in place of evacuating; PPE is not fire protection

THE LAW

Construction Regulations, 2014, regulation 29: Fire precautions on construction sites; Construction Regulations, 2014, regulation 25: Use and temporary storage of flammable liquids on construction sites; General Safety Regulations, 1986, regulation 13J: Fire precaution and means of egress; Pressure Equipment Regulations, 2009, regulation 19: Fire extinguishers. What each one says, in plain words, with links: sitediary.co.za/toolbox-talks/fire-safety/

Toolbox talk attendance register

TOPIC

Fire prevention and fire extinguishers

DATE

SITE OR JOB

TIME

PRESENTER

COMPANY

PRESENTER SIGNATURE

By signing, I confirm that I attended this toolbox talk, that it was given in a language I understand, and that I could ask questions.

NO.	NAME AND SURNAME	COMPANY OR TRADE	SIGNATURE
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Keep this register in the site health and safety file. Log the talk in today's site diary with a photo of this page.