

# CUSTOMER FOCUS ON LOSS CONTROL

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NUMBER 57

## Construction Fire Hazards

### ***Fire Prevention Program***

How long has it been since you have updated your fire prevention program? Even more important: Do you even have a fire prevention program? Fire prevention and protection are something that OSHA is also looking for (29 CFR 1926 Subpart F).

A fire prevention program does not need to be sophisticated. In fact, it can be rather simple. Here are some key locations and systems that need to be checked on a regular basis.

- Heating devices (don't forget the permanent building systems)
- Electrical wiring and equipment
- Storage of flammable liquids and materials
- Welding operations, especially overhead welding and cutting
- Policies prohibiting burning refuse on site
- Internal combustion engines, including exhaust sparks and fuel supplies

### ***Combustible Materials***

When buildings under construction approach completion of the shell erection, the specialty trade contractors come in. With them come the packaging, finishes, and services, causing increased fuel loading. Here are some things to watch for.

- Housekeeping is critical. Remove debris as soon as possible.
- Establish a "No Smoking" policy, and enforce it. Post "No Smoking" signs.
- Provide a specific eating area with waste receptacles. Keep the jobsite from looking like a poorly managed landfill.
- Provide metal containers with self-closing lids for disposal of oily rags and similar materials. Never allow oily rags to accumulate, especially in confined, unventilated areas.
- Never store slaked lime where it can become moist; when damp, it becomes a fire hazard.

The risk of fire on the construction site will vary with the type of construction. During shell erection, a structural steel building with non-combustible curtain walls will have a lower fuel load than a wood frame building. For example, during shell erection, a frame building becomes a vertical kindling pile before the gypsum board goes in; the potential for fire must be considered accordingly. Work to identify problem areas and develop a simple and effective program for fire prevention.

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