

# Your Fire Safety Plan: The Key Ingredients

Since the enactment of Bill C-45 industrial, warehouse, business owners and their health and safety management officials with policy-making and/or supervisory authority are personally legally responsible for preventing bodily harm to any employees in their premises. Given the enormous potential liabilities, business operators and their management personnel are becoming more aware of the risks to the property contents and their employees in their facilities. For this reason, they are evaluating whether they have the key ingredients in place should, for example, a fire emergency arise.

One of the crucial responsibilities these business operators bear to their employees is to keep the fire alarm and sprinkler systems in full working order 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In addition to specialized electronic alerting systems, fire doors, fire dampers and hand-held fire-fighting equipment must be maintained in accordance with the National Fire Code. Specialized contractors are contracted to test, inspect and maintain this equipment year round. While it isn't the employees' responsibility to understand all the mechanical details of this equipment, the owner is responsible for mak-

ing them aware of the building fire safety plan (FSP) in case a fire emergency does arise. It is therefore, by law, the responsibility of business owners and their management administrators to develop and implement a validated FSP.

A Fire Safety Plan is a customized manual that outlines life safety procedures, as well as the availability and description of fire protection equipment within a building. Most importantly, it is an internal map to guide fire fighters in the event that a fire emergency arises. FSP's are prepared by specialized consulting firms which, once drafted, must be submitted to the Fire Department. The Fire Official will review the building FSP for full compliance according to Section 2.8 of the National Fire Code. Their stamp is applied along with the date of approval.

## Objectives of a Fire Safety Plan

The FSP provides an illustrated floor plan layout of a building, including all exits, stairwells and the location of fire and life safety equipment. This floor plan should be posted prominently throughout the entire floor area for all employees to see. The FSP also describes employee evacuation procedures and the fire drill

schedules. It lists emergency contact telephone numbers, specifies procedures for the supervisory teams and identifies employees with special needs. Requirements for daily, weekly, monthly and yearly inspections and testing of the fire and life safety equipment in the building are explained. The main objectives of a fire safety plan are to increase safety awareness for all employees of a building, and to minimize the occurrence of situations that may be life-threatening.

The planning process for business operator and managers involves the identification of potentially hazardous situations in the workplace. Examples of building hazards include improper signage or not enough signage, lack of general awareness of the mode of operation of the fire alarm system in the building or how to respond appropriately, insufficient education for the health and safety supervisory staff to avoid potential misdirection, risks not assessed and incompletely implemented control measures to eliminate or reduce the risk of injury or harm that may occur during a fire evacuation. Business operators, administrators and their supervisory staff have key roles to play during a fire emergency, and must have some form of training on the established fire safety plan. Training in "set fire evacuation procedures" and the establishment of clear escape routes are the key steps to reducing risk of injury and potential loss of life. All employees of a building, not just the personnel who coordinate the emergency fire evacuations, must be familiar with these procedures.

Evaluations of all hazards should be part of the process to ascertain their severity and whether special measures should be employed to reduce the risk. Another step in the program is the tracking of materials and processes that may conflict with each other and possibly cause a disaster. Fire extinguisher training of all your employees is an absolute must. Private training agencies may be contracted to certify your staff's readiness in the event a small fire requires extinguishment at the premises.

*Article kindly provided by F. Baumgartner  
Firepoint Technologies Inc. Brampton, ON.  
www.firepoint.ca*

*Paul Donnelly is a regular contributing editor to OIM. If you'd like more information on this article, please contact [pdonnelly@oim-online.com](mailto:pdonnelly@oim-online.com)*



## RENT INDUSTRIAL EQUIPMENT AT AFFORDABLE RATES WITH WORLD FAMOUS VOLVO QUALITY & SERVICE!



We carry a full range of safety and industrial equipment to meet virtually all your needs:



- Aerial Lifts
- Forklifts
- Compressors
- Generators
- Scaffolding
- Light Towers
- Skid Steers
- Loaders
- Mini Excavators
- and much more...



**Volvo Rents**  
CALL TODAY TO RECEIVE  
OUR 2007 RATE CARD

221 Advance Blvd.  
Brampton, ON, L6T4J2  
Tel: 905-874-8747  
Toll Free: 1-877-487-3687  
Fax: 905-874-9462

1124 South Service Rd. W.  
Oakville, ON, L6L5T7  
Tel: 905-825-3797  
Fax: 905-825-5270