

Aisle ways, Storage and Fire Control

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Improper storage or neglect of a storage area can result in a fire or explosion that may cost lives or serious injuries and reduce your job to ashes.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

Fire extinguishers, circuit breakers and exits disappear when aisles are blocked by boxes, ladders and tables. Sprinklers and smoke detectors are useless when boxes are stored too close to them. If warehoused goods are improperly stacked, workers can be injured or killed by falling or collapsing materials.

EXAMPLE

What if there was a fire in a disorganized warehouse or storage area? You could be trapped in dead end aisles or blocked from emergency exits. Firefighters may be forced to fight the fire from outside if they cannot make their way through the tangle of equipment and jumble of boxes to the core of the fire.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

If stored materials are neat and orderly, eliminating hazards and conserving space can be achieved. The goal is free and unrestricted aisles.

- When planning to store materials and equipment, always allow the required clearance for vehicles and equipment in the aisles. Three feet (one meter) for persons and a space of at least two feet (.6 meters) on either side of any vehicle is a good guideline.
- Never allow materials or equipment to protrude into the aisles as this may not allow enough clearance for firefighting equipment to pass.
- Ensure that all extinguishers, hoses and circuit breaker boxes are easily seen and easy to get to.
- Keep all stored material at least 18 inches (.4 meters) from all sprinkler heads, smoke detectors and electrical sources.
- Never allow exits to be blocked, either from the inside with boxes or from the outside with trash and snow.
- Ensure that drums filled with flammable liquids are stored in a separate, cool, protected area. Heat from any source can cause liquids to expand and the resulting build-up of pressure could cause leaks which will lead to fire or explosion.
- Have a rule ensuring that empty drums are removed promptly, as trapped vapors can still present an explosion hazard.
- Enforce the use of safe procedures until they are a habit. In the event of even a small emergency there will be less chance of injuries from being struck by or caught between materials or moving equipment.

FINAL WORD

If your storage area is cluttered and materials are not properly stacked, you are looking at a recipe for disaster. Keep your storage areas neat and organized to help prevent tragic incidents.