

Reporting Fires and Fire Survival

INITIAL RESPONSE Immediately upon discovering a fire in the workplace perform the following actions.

PROCEDURES

Fire Alarm Activate the building fire alarm system.

Actions Determine whether to fight the fire or leave the area.

Fight Fire WSU personnel may elect to attempt to fight the fire if the fire is small and can be successfully extinguished by means of a fire extinguisher (see *SPPM* 8.22), baking soda, or smothering with a blanket or coat (preferably wool).

Rule of Thumb If the flame height exceeds four feet, do not attempt to fight the fire. The type of combustible involved and the extent of the fire may also preclude fighting a fire with smaller flames.

Report Fire Report the fire to the local area fire department even if it is successfully extinguished and little or no damage is done.

Sealing Off Area If the fire is too large to fight, close the doors and windows to the involved area. This action compartmentalizes the fire, robbing it of necessary oxygen and making it more difficult to spread to other parts of the building.

TELEPHONE REPORT Go to the nearest safe area and telephone 911.

Dialing 911 connects the caller with the Emergency Communications Operator (ECO).

Remain calm. Relay the following information about the fire:

- Exact location
- Size of the fire
- Area of involvement
- Whether there are people trapped by the fire
- Injuries caused by the fire
- Other pertinent facts or complications regarding the fire

After relaying the information, **DO NOT HANG UP ON THE ECO**. The operator may require more information. Let the ECO hang up on you.

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EVACUATION

Exiting the Building

NOTE: Building occupants are required to leave the building when the fire alarm sounds. Persons remaining in the building are in violation of the *International Fire Code* and may be found guilty of a misdemeanor.

Follow the predetermined evacuation plan for the work area.

When exiting:

- Check doors for heat or smoke before opening. Close doors after passing through.
- Do not lock doors or allow doors to lock. Locked doors could preclude return should the fire prevent exit.
- If smoke is encountered, crawl rather than walk. Air is cooler and less toxic nearer the floor.
- Never use an elevator.
- If smoke is present in a stairwell, do not enter the stairwell. Choose another route.
- To extinguish burning clothes; stop, drop, and roll.
- After exiting, move at least 50 yards from the building.

Be available (or make sure someone else is available) to give firefighters as much information about the fire as possible. Be factual, calm, and brief.

Handicapped Employees

Departments with handicapped employees are to contact the WSU Fire Marshal and/or the local area fire department *prior* to an emergency. The WSU Fire Marshal and local area fire departments provide assistance with organizing plans to evacuate handicapped departmental employees (see *SPPM 8.27*).

PROCEDURE IF TRAPPED BY FIRE

If trapped in the work area:

- Seal door/window cracks and ventilation grills with tape (preferably duct tape) or towels and/or clothing (preferably wet) to keep smoke out.

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PROCEDURE IF TRAPPED BY FIRE (cont.)

- If there is smoke in the room, open the window to let it out. To signal rescuers, hang a large article of cloth out of a corner of the window. Close the window again and seal cracks. Keep window closed to prevent outside smoke from entering.
- Do not break the window unless the room has been invaded by smoke and you must get air to survive. Remember, stay close to the floor for air.
- Call the WSU emergency phone number (911) to report the fire location.
- If it is necessary to filter smoke, tie a towel or clothing (preferably wet) around the nose and mouth.
- Do not jump.