ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS

Safety and Loss Control News

October 2016

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Prepared by Gallagher Bassett Services, Inc.

Fire Prevention Week is October 9-15, 2016
"Smoke Alarm Safety Tips" from the NFPA

October 9-15, 2016 is Fire Prevention Week, sponsored by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). The theme of this year's campaign is "Don't Wait—Check the Date! Replace Smoke Alarms Every 10 Years." To learn more about the campaign, log on to www.fpw.org and be sure to download the Fire Prevention Week infographic (FPW16Infographic.pdf), which illustrates how to check smoke alarms for expiration dates.

In addition to checking smoke alarm dates, it is also important to know how to select, set up and maintain the smoke alarm. The following article is excerpted from the National Fire Protection Association Fact Sheet: "Smoke Alarm Safety Tips."

Smoke alarms save lives. Almost two-thirds of home fire deaths resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms. When there is a fire, smoke spreads fast and you need smoke alarms to give you time to get out.

Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each separate sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement. Interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.
An ionization smoke alarm is generally more responsive to flaming fires, and a photoelectric smoke alarm is generally more responsive to smoldering fires. For the best protection, both types of alarms or a combination alarm (photoelectric and ionization) should be installed in homes.

Test alarms at least monthly by pushing the test button.
Smoke rises; install smoke alarms following manufacturer's instructions high on a wall or on a ceiling. Save the manufacturer's instructions for testing and maintenance.

Replace batteries in all smoke alarms at least once a year. If an alarm "chirps," warning the battery is low, replace the battery right away.

Replace all smoke alarms, including alarms that use 10-year batteries and hard-wired alarms, when they are 10 years old or sooner if they do not respond properly.

Be sure the smoke alarm has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.

Alarms that are hard-wired (and include battery backup) must be installed by a qualified electrician.

If cooking fumes or steam sets off nuisance alarms, replace the alarm with an alarm that has a "hush" button. A "hush" button will reduce the alarm's sensitivity for a short period of time.

An ionization alarm with a hush button or a photoelectric alarm should be used if the alarm is within 20 feet of a cooking appliance.

Smoke alarms that include a recordable voice announcement in addition to the usual alarm sound, may be helpful in waking children through the use of a familiar voice.

Smoke alarms are available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. These devices use strobe lights. Vibration devices can be added to these alarms.

Smoke alarms are an important part of a home fire escape plan.

Replace all smoke alarms, including alarms that use 10-year batteries and hard-wired alarms, when they are 10 years old or sooner if they do not respond properly.

Inside this issue:

Conducting Effective Facility Inspections

There are many simple precautions and safeguards that you can undertake to prevent accidents and the associated bodily injuries and/or property damage that can occur. It is important to formally inspect your entire facility at least quarterly. Review your findings with your management team or parish council and follow-up periodically.

Keep in mind that effective self-inspections are based on six key points:

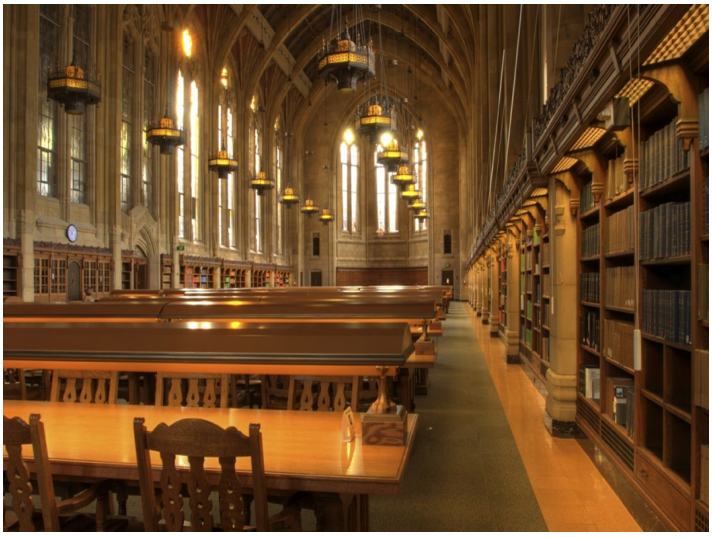
1. Systematically covering the area;
2. Planning your survey and allowing adequate time to complete it;
3. Looking for potentially dangerous situations;
4. Documenting hazards and developing a corrective action priority list;
5. Taking corrective action; and
6. Following-up on past recommendations.

Common Fire/Life Safety Exposures: Poorly maintained heating systems; excessive use of extension cords and overloading of outlets; candles used near combustible decorations; condition of kitchen, including grease build-up/combustibles near the stove and vent hoods; exits that are blocked, bolted shut or otherwise obstructed; emergency lighting that is not in place or functioning; and fire extinguishers that do not function or have not been inspected on a yearly basis.

Common Slip, Trip and Fall Exposures: Poor housekeeping; excessively waxed floors; uneven walking surfaces; loose or frayed carpeting; lack of handrails/loose handrails; electrical cords in aisles/walkways; stairway treads and nosings in poor condition; interior and exterior walking surfaces and parking lots in poor condition; inadequate indoor and outdoor lighting, especially by entrance and exit areas; lack of procedures for snow and ice removal; and broken or deteriorated pews, kneelers and confessionals.

Common Workplace Exposures: Poor condition of power equipment, tools and motorized vehicles; poor housekeeping; insufficient carts and dollies provided for the movement of large items; lack of proper personal protective equipment provided such as gloves, safety glasses, goggles, and safety shoes; ladders that are missing rungs, protective footing or are simply worn out; missing guards on power equipment, saws, drills, and mowers; pads missing from low hanging objects such as pipes and fixtures; worn or frayed extension cords; and improper use and storage of toxic substances such as lawn chemicals, fertilizers, pest control poisons and cleaning substances.

Common Security Exposures: Doors and windows missing locks or left open; computers that are accessible without a password; low outdoor lighting levels around buildings and parking lots; security systems that are not tested regularly such as CCTV, buzzers, and door pin sensors; unchecked buildings for stay-behinds at the conclusion of events or during “off” hours.



Common Vehicle Safety Exposures: Vehicles that are not equipped with accident reporting kits; vehicles that do not receive regularly scheduled maintenance; missing records from vehicle maintenance and repairs; and not keeping copies of operator driver’s licenses on file.

Steps to Achieve Fire Prevention and Safety for All Locations

The following five steps provide a review of fire safety principles so that you can keep your parish properties free from the devastating effects of fire.

1. **Flammable Liquids**
   - Read labels
   - Be aware of vapors
   - Use appropriate containers and cabinets
   - Do not smoke in the immediate area
   - Store and dispose of liquids properly
2. **Electrical Safety**
   - Don’t overload outlets
   - Don’t bypass ground plugs
   - Inspect and report damaged cords
   - Use extension cords for temporary use only
3. **Fire Extinguishers**
   - Know their location and keep them clear of obstructions
   - Know how to operate the fire extinguisher
   - If trained, direct flow at the bottom of the fire
   - Never delay reporting a fire
4. **Good Housekeeping Principles**
   - Smoke only where it is permitted
   - Use and empty ashtrays
   - Remove trash frequently
5. **Evacuation Drills**
   - Develop a plan and practice it
   - Know exit locations and keep them clear of obstructions
   - Do not use the elevator
   - Remain calm

Boiler and Hot Water Heater Inspections

Boiler and hot water heater malfunctions can result in claims amounting to millions of dollars, not to mention the risk of injury to anyone nearby when the incident occurs. When these systems are not properly maintained, failure of the system can result in fire, explosion, frozen pipes, water damage or worse. Basic maintenance and a qualified service provider help to ensure uninterrupted service and safety.

Boilers

The leading cause of boiler failures is low water. Trouble often starts with a leak, which could appear as a damp spot or small puddle on the floor. If the boiler/water heater safety devices are working properly, a small leak will cause problems over time which will require repair. If the safety devices are not working properly, serious problems are imminent because low water in a boiler/water heater is like an engine without oil. A system failure is only a matter of time.

The results of boiler/water heater failures are costly repairs, replacement, and possible new construction if an old building must be adapted to accommodate new equipment.

To keep your systems running smoothly and safely, consider the following strategic maintenance tips.

- Contact a competent service firm to disassemble the low water cutoff (LWCO) and make-up water feeding devices. All parts should be thoroughly cleaned and reconditioned as required, then tested before the boiler or water heater is put into regular service. While in service, the LWCO should be tested once a month for hot water boilers. Hot water heaters should be drained twice a year.

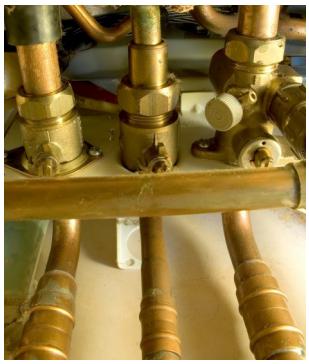
- Burner equipment should be cleaned and adjusted to provide maximum efficiency. This can save fuel dollars throughout the life of the equipment.

- The boiler heating surfaces, firebox, ash pit, casing and ducts should be cleaned of all deposits. Dirty internal surfaces not only waste fuel and dollars, but also can lead to the burning, bulging, cracking, corrosion and even explosion of the boiler.

- The safety and safety relief valve should be tested for freedom of operation. This is of primary importance. The boiler or water heater must not be fired if the safety and safety relief valves are inoperative or otherwise defective. These valves should be tested once a month while in service.

- All pressure and temperature controls and gages should be checked for satisfactory operation and adjusted or replaced as necessary.

- The water level gage glass must be cleaned to indicate that water is at the proper level at all times.



- The entire heating system should be inspected for leaking pipes or fittings. Deficient parts should be repaired or replaced to prevent a loss of water.

- Water lines exposed to freezing temperatures should be insulated to prevent freeze-up. Steam and condensate return lines should be insulated to prevent unnecessary heat loss. This action will reduce fuel bills and eventually more than pay for itself.

- All mechanical equipment, such as fans and pumps, should be checked for smooth operation and proper lubrication.

- A suitable record of boiler operation should be established and maintained throughout the season.

- The boiler room should be kept dry and clean. Storage should not be placed in the boiler room.

These tips should prove helpful in prolonging the life of your boiler or water heater, as well as provide a safe environment. Keep in mind however that even though you follow a preventive maintenance routine, unexpected problems could still occur. Check your insurance policy to see if you have boiler insurance. If you do not, consider adding this coverage. It is a small premium to pay considering the cost of a problem.

Water Heaters

Most workplaces and homes have domestic hot water that is heated by electric, gas or oil water heaters. As a hot water faucet is opened, heated water is drawn from the top of the water heater's tank. The heated water is replaced by cold water that flows into the bottom of the tank. When the water temperature drops below a pre-set minimum, a thermostat activates electric heating elements or a gas or oil burner.

A temperature-pressure relief valve guards against excessive temperatures and pressures. This safety valve should be located near the top of the tank. A discharge pipe should be attached to the relief valve and run down the side of the tank to just above the floor. This discharge pipe prevents burns and other damage from discharged water. There must be no valves, caps or other obstructions preventing discharged water from draining rapidly. If the temperature-pressure relief valve ever discharges steam or boiling water, shut off the water heater and call a plumber immediately.

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GUIDE. GUARD. GO BEYOND.

If there are any subjects you would like to see addressed in this newsletter, or questions about a topic presented, please contact Ms. Amanda Weller, Gallagher Bassett Services, Inc., Two Pierce Place, Itasca, IL 60143, Telephone: 815-236-5170, Email: Amanda_Weller@gbtpa.com.

Boiler and Hot Water Heater Inspections

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Sediment can accumulate at the bottom of the water heater's tank. This reduces the unit's efficiency and can cause serious damage. Unusual noises from the tank such as "whistling and sizzling" or "rumbling and cracking" can be a sign of sediment buildup. A drain valve near the bottom of the water heater can be used to prevent sediment accumulation. Once a month, place a bucket under the valve and drain water and sediment from the bottom of the tank (5 gallons or so) until the water runs clear.

You should also inspect the water heater once every 6 months. During the inspection, check to see whether there are any signs that water has leaked or been discharged from the temperature-pressure relief valve. If so, call a plumber immediately. The relief valve may be faulty or there may be a problem with the water heater.

Test the relief valve by lifting or pressing down on its handle. Water should flow through the valve and down the discharge pipe. If water does not flow through the valve or if water continues to drip from the valve after the handle is released, call a plumber immediately to replace the defective valve.

Inspect the cold water supply pipe, the hot water outlet pipe, the water heater's metal housing and along the unit's base for rust, corrosion and signs of leaks. If you find a moist area, wipe it with a towel to determine whether the moisture is from a leak or from condensation. Repair all leaks or have the tank replaced if necessary.

If you have a gas or oil-fired water heater, you should have the unit professionally serviced at the same time your heating system is serviced. The service person should inspect and test the temperature and pressure relief valve, drain sediment from the tank, inspect the flue assembly and clean and adjust the burner ports.

It is important to complete a regular self inspection of the area where the boiler or water heater is located. It is even more important to have an inspection plan for when the building is vacant or unoccupied for any length of time. More often than not, problems arise in this type of situation and nobody is aware of a problem until there is property damage.

Should you have an incident with your boiler or water heater, it is imperative you report the claim immediately. If you are unsure of whom to contact for cleanup and repair, ask when reporting the claim. It is also beneficial to maintain a folder of documentation and invoices. By maintaining this information, it will be accessible to you and available should the claim adjuster request additional information.