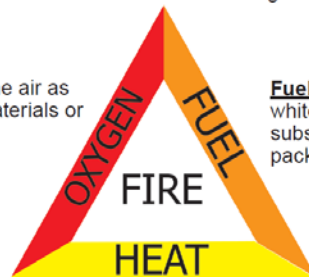


## Fire Hazards: Employee Factsheet

In order to have a fire you must have all three of the following:

**Oxygen** = examples: from the air as well as artificial, oxidising materials or oxygen in cylinders.



**Fuel** = examples: flammable liquid (eg paints, varnish, white spirit), adhesives, solvents, cooking oils, flammable substances (eg cleaning, photocopier chemicals), packaging, wood, card, paper (in particular shredded).

**Heat (and sources of ignition)** = examples: smoking, lights, naked flames, electrical, gas or oil fired heaters, hot works, faulty electrical equipment, hot surfaces, obstruction/lack of ventilation of electrical equipment, arson.

### What is the issue?

Fire extinguishers take away one or more of these three elements, eg water extinguishers take away the heat, carbon dioxide extinguishers use gas, which displaces the air so the CO2 smothers the fire.

It is very important that good housekeeping practices are adhered to and sources of fuel such as cardboard and shredded paper etc are not allowed to accumulate particularly near sources of ignition.

Your employer must carry out a fire risk assessment and ensure staff have a safe escape route to a place of safety. Emergency doors for large numbers of people must open in the direction of escape, and no emergency exit must be locked or fastened when the premises are occupied. Where required escape routes must have emergency lighting. Emergency routes and exits must never be obstructed. Your employer must also provide fire safety procedures, fire extinguishers, adequate fire detection and alarm systems, fire safety signage and training for staff on the fire procedure and the action to be taken in an emergency. Regular fire drills must be carried out.

### Did you know?

#### Fact 1

In the year to March 2013, 16,500 workplace fires were attended by the fire brigade in England.

#### Fact 2

You do not need a flame for a fire to start. Some materials like oily rags can self-heat and old, poorly maintained or poorly wired electrical appliances or cables can be very dangerous. Report all defects.

## Identifying the risk

- Do you work with flammable materials (eg substances, oily rags and combustibles such as cardboard boxes etc)?
- has your employer identified adequate storage and disposal of flammable materials?
- do you have the correct fire fighting equipment for your working area?
- have all staff received fire safety training?
- are you aware of the location of your emergency exits and assembly point?
- do you have special requirements which mean you need assistance in emergency evacuation?

## Controlling risk

Never get electrical items (plugs sockets etc) wet, do not overload sockets and make sure you turn items off overnight unless they are intended to remain on

- report all defects such as frayed cables and scorched or hot plugs
- ensure fire doors designed to stop the spread of fire and smoke are kept closed (unless on automatic release devices)
- follow your employer's instructions on fire safety
- know the fire procedure and how to raise the alarm
- never obstruct a emergency route or exit
- ensure good housekeeping practices and safe storage and disposal of materials such as combustibles and oily rags
- make sure you are familiar with the escape routes from your workplace and the assembly points
- familiarise yourself with the location and types of fire fighting equipment.

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