

County of Tuolumne

Fire Safety

Effective: July 1, 1991

Revised: June 2001

The California Fire Code and OSHA establish that every business shall have a fire safety/evacuation plan that covers notification, relocation, and evacuation of building occupants.

The Fire Safety Policy for Tuolumne County in conjunction with Tuolumne County Fire Prevention Bureau is designed to provide the employee and visitor with optimum knowledge a safety within County facilities.

Department heads are required to provide fire safety/ evacuation training for employees and shall be included as part of basic orientation for all new employees. Fire safety/ evacuation training shall be provided for every department within each County facility.

Fire Prevention:

Good housekeeping will decrease or eliminate the risk of fire. Reduce the potential of electrical fires by following the approved guidelines of the equipment used. Department heads should delegate the inspection of electrical equipment to a qualified employee. This employee should look for basic violations such as:

- Storage of combustible material in an electrical utility closet, or near any ignition source
- overloaded outlets
- frayed or damage cords or plugs
- extension cord use as a permanent rather than temporary power source
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- defective circuit breakers with makeshift repairs

All Department Heads shall be responsible to schedule and complete their own inspections and document corrective recommendations. All Departments shall be required to provide for, or make corrections if valid.

Tuolumne County is a smoke-free workplace. Smoking is not allowed within any County building. Smoking is allowed only in designated smoking areas that comply with the County's smoking policy which is outlined in Tuolumne County Ordinance Code Section 8.36. **All employees shall be informed that all offices and entryways are "smoke-free" zones.**

The use of portable heaters near combustible material is prohibited. If space heaters are utilized, they shall operate in an area free of combustible material. All space heaters shall be unplugged when unattended or when the office is closed.

Department heads should monitor the use of extension cords. Extension cords shall not be used as a permanent power source.

Required Elements of a Department Fire Safety Plan:

Elements of an effective fire safety plan shall include, but is not limited to the training of employees in regards to safe prevention practices and evacuation plans.

- All employees shall understand their personal responsibilities and the proper procedures during the evacuation process.
- A visitor “sign-in” sheet should be used where practical to aid in evacuation and help identify those in the building who are not employees if there is an emergency.
- A system is recommended that will notify employees of an emergency and signal the need for evacuation. In County buildings that are equipped with fire alarms all employees shall be made aware of their location and how the system operates. Alarm location shall be included on the evacuation plan posted in the individual departments.
- *County employees shall be trained to dial 9911 from County buildings in the event of an emergency.*

Evacuation Plan:

An evacuation plan must be put together and appropriate people assigned to manage the plan. A proper evacuation plan should include:

1. Evacuation Routes: Each department shall plan a route to be used to leave the building in case of fire or another emergency. Primary and secondary routes must be designated. Maps shall be posted in highly visible areas accessible to both visitors and employees. The evacuation map will also include a primary and secondary accumulation points where building occupants will gather. Accountability of employees and visitors shall be done at these points.
2. Monitor Duties: Each Department shall appoint a monitor to be responsible for the evacuation procedures. In addition, at least one alternate monitor shall be appointed for coverage during absences. The names of the assigned monitors shall be listed on the evacuation route sheets. The monitors are responsible for ensuring *everyone* does evacuate (even during a drill), doors and windows are shut if time allows power is turned off, and getting an accurate count of those evacuated for Fire Department use.
3. Employee Duties: Individual employees may be assigned other duties as required by their department to assist in the emergency evacuation process. Employees are required to do the following during evacuation:
 - Ensure visitors in the area evacuate also
 - Shut down equipment if possible
 - Assist those with disabilities to evacuate.

When evacuations are in progress:

- Close, but don't lock, all doors behind you
- Use the safest stairwell to exit; **do not use the elevator!** Stay low under smoke.
- Meet in a pre-determined designated area for accountability.

These duties will vary from department to department and shall be described in writing and clearly communicated during training sessions.

The evacuation plan will also be put into use in the event of a natural disaster, bomb threat, or other emergency.

Fire Extinguishers:

Employees should be trained to know the locations and proper use of portable fire extinguishers. Training on fire extinguisher use shall be provided every two- (2) years by each department to familiarize employees with their use. It is the Department Head's responsibility to arrange these trainings and contact the Fire Prevention Bureau to assist if necessary.

To properly extinguish a fire and provide safety to building occupants, the following conditions need to be met and trained upon:

1. Employees must be adequately trained so as to be familiar and comfortable with the use of extinguishers.
2. Extinguishers must be visible, easily reachable, in proper working order, and fully charged.
3. Extinguishers shall be mounted near exits. The operator must maintain an escape route that will not become blocked by fire.
4. Extinguishers shall be matched with the type of fuel available for a fire (ex. class A fuel use a class A extinguisher).
5. Extinguishers must be large enough to extinguish a fire. Portable extinguishers may discharge completely in as few as ten seconds.

It should be stressed during training that employees should not attempt to extinguish a fire unless it is confined to a small area, spreading slowly and there is a clear path to an exit.

Further training suggestions are available through the Fire Prevention Bureau. 533-5549