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Evaluation of Fire and Rescue Services

When welding, grinding, torch cutting, and similar activities occur near combustible materials — such as fuels, cargo, building materials, and debris — small fires can occur and quickly get out of control. Oxygen-enriched atmospheres can cause ordinarily fire-resistant materials to readily burn. Often, these fire-producing activities occur in enclosed or confined spaces where combustible gases and toxic fumes can build up to unsafe levels or deplete oxygen. This makes it more difficult for workers to escape and be rescued. An effective rescue and response plan is essential for saving workers' lives in shipyards where fires are a common hazard.

This document and checklists can help employers in the shipyard industry to evaluate the adequacy of their fire and rescue response capabilities. Where assessment results indicate inadequacies, a more thorough evaluation should be performed to ensure that fire and rescue services can respond effectively. Requirements for worker protection from fire hazards are in [29 CFR 1915 Subpart P – Fire Protection in Shipyard Employment](#). Included in this subpart are elements designed to ensure adequate fire response, including planning, training, equipment requirements, and response methods. Other relevant OSHA requirements include [29 CFR 1915.12\(e\) through \(f\)](#) that address emergency procedures and rescue teams for confined and enclosed spaces, or other dangerous atmospheres, and [29 CFR 1915.87\(c\)\(1\)\(ii\)](#) for medical services and first aid providers.

Make sure your facility is ready for an emergency by:

- Having a written fire safety plan that covers policies for fire, rescue, and emergency response. Review and update the plan at least annually.
- Training workers on the fire safety plan, including hazards, controls, fire safety, health rules, and emergency procedures. Workers designated to fight fires must be trained on the fire safety plan's written operating procedures on a quarterly basis. Employee training must include live response exercises and semi-annual drills.
- Establishing an in-house rescue team or arranging for an off-site source that can provide prompt fire, first aid, and medical response.
- Off-site first aid responders, such as local emergency medical services (EMS), must be able to reach the worksite within five minutes from receiving a report of an injury or illness at your facility.
- Training workers assigned to rescue teams on practices and procedures relevant to their assigned roles, and the proper selection, use and care of personal protective equipment (PPE). Similar preparation is recommended for off-site rescue teams, including training on the hazards they may encounter at each worksite, and familiarity with the layout of the facility.
- Developing an incident management system (or network) for the orderly and safe implementation of fire response functions.

The checklists below provide a series of questions to assist in determining whether your facility is prepared to respond to a fire or other emergency.

Fire Safety Plan

Is there a written fire safety plan?	Yes	No
Does the written fire safety plan include the following?		
• Identification of fire hazards	Yes	No
• Procedures for recognizing and reporting unsafe conditions	Yes	No
• Alarm procedures	Yes	No
• Procedures for notifying workers and the fire response organization of a fire emergency	Yes	No
• Evacuation procedures, including ways to account for workers after evacuation	Yes	No
• Whom to contact for additional information on the plan	Yes	No
• Policies for fire, rescue, and emergency response	Yes	No
Has the written plan been reviewed with workers and accessible to all?	Yes	No
Does the written plan include the following for evacuation?		
• Emergency escape procedures	Yes	No
• Procedures for critical team members who must remain on-site during an evacuation	Yes	No
• Means of reporting fires	Yes	No
• Methods to account for workers after an evacuation is completed	Yes	No
Has the plan been reviewed and updated annually, and have all changes been documented?	Yes	No

Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Response

Has a determination been made whether personnel in-house, off-site, or a combination thereof will be used for fire, rescue, and emergency response?	Yes	No
Does the written policy for fire, rescue, and emergency response indicate whether in-house, off-site, or a combination thereof will be used and their organizational structure?	Yes	No
Is there an incident management system (or network) in place that establishes clear lines of authority, assigns responsibilities, ensures accountability, and outlines in-house and off-site resources?	Yes	No
In-House Response		
Does the response policy include the following?		
• Evacuation procedures	Yes	No
• Structure of the organization	Yes	No
• Number of trained fire response workers	Yes	No
• Functions that may need to be carried out	Yes	No
• Number of fire fighters necessary to respond to a fire	Yes	No
• Number and type of apparatuses and suppression operations for each type of response	Yes	No

• Information on the layout of the facility, including access routes to potential fire sites	Yes	No
• How hose and coupling connections are to be made compatible and their locations	Yes	No
Does the policy contain a list of qualified individuals, emergency contacts and phone numbers?	Yes	No
Has the rescue team been trained and know how to use appropriate PPE, including respirators, and any special equipment that may be necessary for confined space rescue?	Yes	No
Has the rescue team conducted a drill using practice dummies and rescue equipment during the last 12 months?	Yes	No
Has a live response exercise or drill been done in locations that closely represent those locations where an actual rescue may be required?	Yes	No
Does at least one person on the rescue team have current certification on basic first aid that includes maintenance of an airway, control of bleeding, maintenance of circulation, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) skills?	Yes	No
If contract employers are present on-site, have they received training on workplace hazards, safety rules, and emergency response policy?	Yes	No

Off-Site Response

Does the response policy include the following?		
• Types of incidents the organization is expected to respond	Yes	No
• Liaison between the facility and the outside organization	Yes	No
• Procedures for obtaining outside assistance	Yes	No
Has a copy of rescue policies been provided to the off-site rescue team for prompt response?	Yes	No
Has information on the hazards associated with conducting confined space rescue been provided to off-site organizations to ensure that they will have the proper training and equipment available?	Yes	No

Combination In-House and Off-Site Response

In addition to those items outlined for in-house and off-site, does the response policy include the following?		
• Organization structure of the combined fire response	Yes	No
• The number of combined responders	Yes	No
• Functions to be carried out by each organization	Yes	No
• The minimum number of fire response personnel necessary	Yes	No
• The number and types of apparatuses, along with a description of the fire suppression operations for each type of response	Yes	No
• The type, amount, and frequency of joint training	Yes	No

Fire Response Medical Requirements

Do fire response workers receive annual physicals to ensure that they are able to perform their expected duties?	Yes	No
Are an adequate number of responders trained in respiratory protection, including fit testing where applicable?	Yes	No
Are medical records of current staff kept on file for at least one year?	Yes	No

Note: If an actual rescue has been conducted within the last 12 months, this type of training does not have to be repeated in the 12-month window. However, it is recommended that more frequent drills be conducted in locations where rescues may occur.

Where Can I Get More Information?

Visit the OSHA website at www.osha.gov for more information about fire hazards in shipyard employment and fire and rescue services necessary to respond to and extinguish fires arising from shipyard operations. Your nearest OSHA office can also provide more information.

Also, OSHA's On-Site Consultation Program offers free and confidential occupational safety and health services to small and medium-sized businesses in all states and several territories, with priority given to high-hazard worksites. On-Site Consultation services are separate from enforcement and do not result in penalties or citations. Consultants from state agencies or universities work with employers to identify workplace hazards, provide advice on compliance with OSHA standards, and assist in establishing and improving safety and health programs. To locate the OSHA On-Site Consultation Program nearest you, call 1-800-321-6742 (OSHA) or visit www.osha.gov/consultation.

Workers' Rights

Workers have the right to:

- Working conditions that do not pose a risk of serious harm.
- Receive information and training (in a language and vocabulary the worker understands) about workplace hazards, methods to prevent them, and the OSHA standards that apply to their workplace.
- Review records of work-related injuries and illnesses.
- File a complaint asking OSHA to inspect their workplace if they believe there is a serious hazard or that their employer is not following OSHA's rules. OSHA will keep all identities confidential.
- Exercise their rights under the law without retaliation, including reporting an injury or raising health and safety concerns with their employer or OSHA. If a worker has been retaliated against for using their rights, they must file a complaint with OSHA as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days.

For additional information, see [OSHA's Workers page](#).

How to Contact OSHA

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA's role is to ensure these conditions for America's working men and women by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, education and assistance. For more information, visit www.osha.gov or call OSHA at 1-800-321-OSHA (6742), TTY 1-877-889-5627.



U.S. Department of Labor



This is one in a series of informational fact sheets highlighting OSHA programs, policies or standards. It does not impose any new compliance requirements. For a comprehensive list of compliance requirements of OSHA standards or regulations, refer to Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations. This information will be made available to sensory-impaired individuals upon request. The voice phone is (202) 693-1999; teletypewriter (TTY) number: 1-877-889-5627.

