

Previous Suspicious Fires Identification

Line of Business: Property

Risk Control Strategy/Key Issues: Establish notification procedures and document suspicious fires.

Suggested Program Elements:

- 1. Program statement:** A general statement noting that the policy establishes the responsibility and accountability of management and employees in how to recognize and document suspicious fires. The statement should inform all of the goals of the policy; specifically how to recognize fire hazards that could cause a fire or loss of life.
- 2. Employee Responsibilities:** Written guidelines should be established that assign responsibilities and accountability for program enforcement. It is recommended that one individual within the organization be chosen. This individual should have the authority to implement all written procedures and controls of the program. The program should also include what is expected of employees. These responsibilities should include reporting all fires no matter how small, report observed fire play, and report all arson threats and rumors.
- 3. Response:** A fire prevention program is the first line of defense in preventing a fire from occurring. It is very important that management take all reports seriously and investigate all fires, especially small ones. All investigations should be documented with the date, time, location/site, witnesses; point of origin or item(s) burned, any injuries, property damage, and was fire/police contacted? -- why or why not. Third party statements or unsubstantiated rumors or information that cannot be verified should not be documented. It is also a good idea to consult with the site administrator and local fire department liaison for assistance and a professional opinion. Also check to see if the "WeTip" anonymous reporting line posters are on display. If not they should be put in place ASAP to assure that all lines of communication is open to the student body and community.
- 4. Pre Incident:** A good fire prevention program should be in place. This program should include:
 - Routine fire inspections. Contact your Trident Risk Control Consultant if you would like a copy of a fire inspection form.
 - A good housekeeping program -- inside and outside. This requires routine inspections and follow-ups to assure that corrections are made.
 - Proper material storage, to include flammable / combustible liquids storage.
 - Building security program – installation of security systems, controlling access to the building or certain areas of the building, and reporting of unfamiliar persons.
 - Installation of fire notification and suppression devices – fire alarms, smoke detectors, sprinkler systems, fire extinguishers, etc. These devices should be centrally monitored.
 - Develop and implement an emergency evacuation plan for the overall organization and individual buildings. The plans should be routinely practiced. Refer to Trident's Emergency Procedures Elements guide for information on developing an emergency response plan.
 - A no smoking policy should be in place. The policy should also dictate where employees are allowed to smoke. The organization should provide adequate disposal device for the extinguishing of smoking material. This location should be monitored and cleaned regularly. Any violator of the policy should be disciplined.

- Train employees in fire hazard recognition and evacuation. Employees should be required to report all fires no matter how small, report observed fire play, and report all arson threats and rumors.
 - Building design – meets appropriate building codes (NFPA), material used, layout, building services, exterior concerns (traffic and transportation conditions, fire department accessibility, water supply), adjoining building exposure, fire doors, smoke control, access, and so on.
- 5. Post Incident:** The speed of an organizations response to a crisis will determine the outcome. This outcome can be positive or negative. An active crisis management program allows organizational coordination, clear instruction on what is expected of management and line personnel, continual assessment of crisis while it is in progress, and continuity of business operations. If a substantial fire occurs the following steps are recommended:
- Ensure that no one is exposed to the hazards of a fire site by taking steps to control access to it.
 - Protect undamaged assets from the elements.
 - Notify your third party administrator and the insurance company immediately so the restoration process can began.
 - Have a fixed inventory sheet available for the insurance representative. The inventory should be kept up to date and stored in a safe place. Multiple copies are highly recommended.
- Important:** Clean up should not take place until after the Fire Department and the Insurance Carrier's representatives are finished with their investigations.
- 6. Training:** Regular training will help all involved become familiar with exactly what is expected of them during all stages of the program. It will also give them the confidence to perform their duties that are essential to the success of the program.
- 7. Document Handling Procedures:** All information generated by the fire investigation should be kept confidential and stored in a locked file. Investigative material should be limited to:
- Police / Fire department investigators
 - Involved management personnel
 - Local legal council
 - Organizations insurance company claims personnel
 - Defense attorneys

Program Activities Calendar:

- Monitor reports monthly to determine any trends/patterns
- Review program annually

Web Links:

- Federal Emergency Management Agency
<http://www.fema.gov>

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