Emergency Exits



WHAT'S AT STAKE?

An emergency exit you can't find in the dark is one you may not be able to find in a crisis situation. That's why knowing the location of emergency exits at your worksite, and being able to find them without thinking, is so important.

WHAT'S THE DANGER?

We pass them every day. Emergency exits are designed to lead us outdoors and away from danger. But how many of us really see them or consider how we'd find them if disaster were to strike? Now's the time to take notice of what may be one of the most overlooked safety devices around: The emergency exit.

Example

In 1911, a tragic fire claimed the lives of 114 women working at the Triangle Waist Company shirt factory in New York. The women worked in a building crammed with combustible cloth and were trapped by exit doors that were locked from the outside.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

- Make a habit of locating emergency exits as soon as you enter any building or room. Remember that an elevator should never be used during an emergency.
- Familiarize yourself with your company's evacuation procedures and how they apply to workers with a physical disability.
- An emergency exit is like any piece of safety equipment. It must be properly maintained in order to be effective. You can help by keeping exits, and pathways to them, clear.
- Never store anything in front of an emergency exit, even temporarily.
- Check to see that emergency exit doors are not locked from the inside. This is a very dangerous practice – and it is against the law.
- Report any structural problems that may affect an emergency exit route. Look for broken handrails, loose stair treads and doors that do not open easily.
- Notice if overhead lights or signs are burned out or broken and report it to the maintenance department immediately.
- Never store flammable liquids or combustible products near or under an exit or stairway.
- Lighted exit signs should be in good working order and have a battery backup in case of a power failure.

FINAL WORD

So, when you leave this meeting, make a point of identifying two emergency exits in every area you work in. Do the same the next time you go out for the evening or to a public building. Those doors could someday be the most important you ever walk through.