Know How to Find Emergency Exits

Safety Talk

WHAT'S AT STAKE
Every day, without noticing, we pass doors that have "Exit" signs. Usually we don't remember that emergency exit doors are vital to our safety.

WHAT'S THE DANGER
Emergency exits are essential for escaping from:

- Fires inside the building or in the surrounding area.
- Explosions caused by gas leaks or chemical reactions.
- Power outages.
- Building collapse or major structural failure.
- Release of toxic substances or flammable liquid spills.
- Natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes and tornados.
- Violence and terrorism

EXAMPLE
Felicia never took an interest in the location of exit doors until a sequence of events hit the large building where she works.
An explosion started a fire and structurally damaged one part of the building. The fire also caused a loss of electrical power, plunging her work area into darkness. After her supervisor led the crew outside, exits seemed a lot more important.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF
Off the job as well as on the job, no matter where you are in a building and even if you are just passing through, learn the location of at least two emergency exits. However, this doesn't include elevators. Never use an elevator during a fire emergency.

To ensure the emergency exits in your work area are safe:

- Keep exits clear.
- Secure doors to prevent unauthorized entry from the outside, but don't prevent employees from exiting in emergencies.
- Report to your supervisor any structural problems which may affect an emergency exit route. Look for broken hand railings, loose stair treads and doors which don't open easily.
- If you see burned out light bulbs in the overhead fixtures, report them to your maintenance department so they will be replaced.
- Check that lighted exit signs are in good working order. Have a battery backup in case of power failure.
- Never store flammable liquids or combustible products near or under an exit or

stairway.
- Check that emergency exits are properly labeled.
- Keep pathways leading to your escape routes clean and well-maintained, and don’t use aisles for storing stock or
- equipment.
- If you have physical disabilities which make it difficult for you to use some types of emergency exits, learn which exits you can use. Arrange for other employees in your work area to assist you when needed.

FINAL WORD

Knowing your exit routes helps eliminate panic. Get in the habit of looking for two emergency exits wherever you are. Those humble little “Exit” signs could be your best friends in an emergency.