

## Fire Safety Assessment for Contractors

Contractors can provide a wide range of services, including carpentry, masonry, excavation, painting, and electrical work. The work performed can include new installations, additions, alterations, maintenance, and repairs.

The fire exposures for a contractor will vary based on the type of building construction, the size of the facility, and the operations involved. The loss of life, as well as the structure, equipment, and supplies, are the primary fire-loss concerns. Additionally, work performed at job sites presents fire exposures for the contractor, as well as the building owner. The following information can assist in assessing the fire exposures of contractors.

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### 1. Facility Design and Construction

- Is the facility in compliance with local building and fire prevention codes?
- What is the date of the last inspection of the facility by the local fire department?
- Have any renovations and/or alterations been made since the last inspection?
- Are concealed spaces properly fire stopped, or otherwise protected?
- Are there fire exposures from adjacent buildings or structures?
- Are boiler rooms and storage rooms separated from each other and all other spaces by firewalls or fire barriers?
- In warehouse areas, is the travel distance to a fire exit or a separate smoke compartment not more than 200 ft (61 m) or 400 ft (122 m) for areas protected by an automatic sprinkler system?
- In areas with high hazard operations or equipment, such as boiler rooms, is the travel distance to a fire exit or a separate smoke compartment not more than 150 ft (46 m)?
- Are fire exits readily accessible?

### 2. Building Services

- Does the electrical system appear to be in good working condition?
- Is the electrical system adequate to handle the expected loads?
- Are electrical appliances that are used in areas where flammable are stored or dispensed listed/approved for such use by a nationally recognized testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL)?
- Is electrical equipment that is used in wet areas, such as restrooms and outside locations, provided with ground fault protection, including the use of isolated power supplies?
- Is gas- and oil-fired equipment maintained according to the manufacturers' recommendations?



**3. Fire Suppression and Alarm Systems**

- Is the building protected by a fire alarm system that provides both manual and automatic initiation devices?
- Are fire suppression and alarm systems covered by maintenance and service contracts?
- Does the building have a sprinkler system that is installed and maintained in conformance with NFPA 13, Standard for Installation of Sprinkler Systems, published by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)?
- Is there a sufficient number of listed/approved portable fire extinguishers, and are they properly located, as required in NFPA 10, Standard for Portable Fire Extinguishers?
- Are fire extinguishers properly maintained?
- Are employees trained in the use of portable fire extinguishers?

**4. Storage Practices**

- Does the storage of commodities comply with the applicable requirements of NFPA 230, Standard for Fire Protection for Storage?
- Are flammable liquids stored in a protected area that is separated from the rest of the facility?
- Are flammable liquids stored in containers that are listed/approved for such use?
- Are corrosive-liquids stored separately from flammables, either in corrosive-liquids' cabinets or in a room specifically designed for that purpose?
- Is access to above ground fuel storage tanks restricted by fences or other barriers?
- If blasting operations are performed, are explosives stored according to recommended practices?
- Are pesticides stored separately from fertilizers?
- Is mulch and wood chips protected from moisture and provided with adequate ventilation?
- Are compressed gases stored on site?

**5. Operations**

- Are good housekeeping practices followed, including routine cleaning of dust over 1/8 in (3.18 mm) in depth from all surfaces?
- If smoking is allowed on the premises, is it restricted to certain areas?
- Is gasoline-powered equipment, such as generators and heating equipment, used?
- Is proper bonding/grounding provided before transferring flammable liquids into portable containers or equipment fuel tanks?
- Are materials handling equipment in good working order?
- Is a hot-work permit system required for all cutting, welding, and soldering operations?
- Are tar kettles provided with self-closing lids and automatic, thermostatic shutoff valves intended to prevent overheating?

**6. Emergency Preparedness**

- Is there an emergency action plan for the facility?
- Is an emergency response coordinator designated to develop and implement a plan for the containment and cleanup of accidental releases of hazardous materials, such as tar and fuel oil?
- Do employees check the exit doors and exit paths on a daily basis to ensure egress during an emergency?
- Are emergency evacuation drills conducted on a semi-annual basis?

**7. Incendiarism and Arson**

- Are all exterior areas of the business property illuminated?
- Are exterior doors and windows of the business property secured from unauthorized access?
- Is the perimeter of the property protected by a fence?

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