



# Fires in Businesses

## Major Workplace Fires:

- On March 15, 1911 a fire in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory (New York City) claimed the lives of 150 women and young girls due to locked fire exits and inadequate fire extinguishing systems.
- On September 3, 1991, a fire in a Poultry processing plant (Hamlet, North Carolina) claimed the lives of 25 workers, due to problems with fire exits and extinguishing systems.



Fire safety is important in business. The best time to think about fire safety is before a fire starts. Be sure to find out the location of fire escape routes and how to activate the fire alarm. Take part in practice fire drills on a regular basis. Become familiar with stairway exits: Elevators may not function during a fire, or may expose passengers to heat, gas and smoke. Periodic fire inspections and fire drills can help prevent serious injuries.

## Addressing

- Address numbers should be large enough to be visible from the street, and the color of the numerals should contrast with the building color.
- This is good for business and very helpful during emergencies.

## Building Fire Exits

- Do not allow occupant load to exceed the capacity of the room.
- Fire exits must not be locked or blocked when employees or public are within the building.
- Exit paths must be lighted whenever the building is occupied.
- Exit and directional signs must be clearly visible.
- Do not use elevators during a fire or a fire drill.

## Portable Fire Extinguishers

- Each building or floor must have the proper type of fire extinguisher or standpipe for the fire hazards present.
- Proper maintenance is required.
- If employees are expected to use fire extinguishers on small (incipient) fires, they must receive annual education on the general principles of fire extinguisher use and the hazards involved.
- If the employer wishes to evacuate employees, instead of having them fight small fires, there must be a written emergency action plan, and a fire prevention plan.

