Hotel and Motel Fire Safety

Outline For an Employee Safety Program
Introduction

Goals:

To ensure that hotel/motel employees are knowledgeable in fire prevention and emergency response.

Objectives:

Business should:
1) Develop a fire and life safety emergency plan “see handout”
2) Provide training for all employees

Employees should be able to:
1) Describe the emergency procedures for their hotel/motel, in case of fire, or other emergency.
2) Identify common fire hazards in the hotel/motel and how to prevent them.
3) Identify special situations or individuals in the hotel/motel that may require an emergency response different than the standard response; i.e., evacuating instructions for physically impaired persons.
4) Demonstrate how to correctly use a fire extinguisher.
5) Demonstrate the correct manner in which to assist in guest evacuation.

Materials:

- Handouts and brochures (obtained from the Portland Fire Bureau), such as “Portable Fire Extinguishers,” “10 Tips for Fire Safety,” etc.
- Developing your own fire and life safety emergency plan
- Videos (checked out from the Portland Fire Bureau), such as: “Hotel Fire Alert” and “Fire Extinguisher Safety.”

Lesson Outline

Keeping the interest of staff members during fire safety training can be a challenge - especially when you are reviewing information which employees have received in the past. Involving employees in the program is a good way to maintain their interest, while increasing their knowledge level on fire and life safety. Also, try limiting the program to under 60 minutes in length.

GETTING STARTED:

- Review the employees’ objectives.
- Make sure all employees have a copy of your facility’s written fire and life safety emergency plan.
- View “Hotel Fire Alert”. This video provides information on the dangers from fire, and gives a realistic impression of how fire starts and the speed with which fire grows. Points to make with this video include 1) the importance of knowing the fire and life safety emergency plan; 2) the need to become familiar with your emergency procedures before you need to follow them; and 3) the need to react quickly whenever a fire is discovered or the alarm sounds.
The film is appropriate for a variety of employee audiences, even those that are non-English speaking (as many situations are acted out, as well as explained verbally). Focuses primarily on housekeeping and kitchen staff.

**USE THE FOLLOWING SCENARIOS TO STIMULATE DISCUSSION ON EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES**

1) You are making up a room, your cart is in the hallway. You make the bed and go into the hallway to get towels from your cart. You smell smoke from a room at the end of the hall. As soon as you smell the smoke, the alarm goes off. What should you do?

2) You are staffing the front desk in the hotel lobby when you receive a call from hotel personnel that there is a fire. What do you do?

3) You are in the kitchen and a grease fire break out. What do you do? Take this a step further - smoke filters into the restaurant where hotel guests are having dinner. What do you do?

4) The fire alarm goes off on the floor. You don’t know where the fire is. Guests wander out into the hallways to see what happened. What do you do to assist in the safe evacuation of hotel guests? What if some guests do not speak English?

5) You enter a room and discover a cigarette was carelessly tossed into the wastepaper basket and it is smoldering. What do you do?

6) As you are making a bed in one of the guest rooms, you discover a cigarette burn in the bed sheet. Keeping in mind that a cigarette burn can smolder for hours before actually igniting the mattress or upholstery, what do you do?

7) The fire alarm has sounded and as people come out into the hallway you direct them to the nearest stairway. A hotel guest exits his room in a wheelchair. What do you do to assist this individual in a safe evacuation?

8) It is late in the evening and you are delivering room service. As you knock on the door, the fire alarm sounds. Guests do not seem to be coming out of their rooms. You knock harder. Some hotel guests open their doors and sleepily look in the hallway. What procedures should you follow? What if some guests refuse to evacuate this late in the evening.

- Review the actions to be taken if an employee discovers a fire. Remember to stress the importance of 1) alerting others in the building to begin evacuation, calling 9-1-1 as quickly as possible (even if your alarm system is monitored), and 3) closing all doors as you evacuate.
- Discuss your building’s engineered fire and life safety systems. Does everyone know what and where they are, and how they work? Which of the following does your building have, and what is their importance in a fire... smoke detectors, manual pull alarms, stairwells, fire doors, alarm systems, sprinklers, etc.?
- Discuss hazards particular to your facility. What can you identify and what precautions can be taken? Have staff from different areas identify hazards common to their work area (kitchen, laundry, housekeeping, maintenance, night shift, etc)
- Hold a fire drill at the conclusion of your program to practice your building escape plan. Providing treats as an incentive may help raise interest.
- Provide an example of each type of fire extinguisher found in your hotel/motel.
- Distribute fire extinguisher handouts to each employee.
- Show the video “Fire Extinguisher Safety” (12 minutes).
- Discuss the types of fire extinguishers found in your building; their location, how to access them, and the types of fires on which they would (or would not) be used. Identify the parts of the extinguishers. Pass them around, so that everyone can identify and familiarize themselves with handling them.

*** NOTE: Personal safety and the safety of others are the most important factors when deciding whether to fight a small fire. Before you begin to fight a fire, be sure of the following:

- Everyone has left, or is leaving, the building.
- The Fire Department has been called or is being called. Even if you succeed in putting out the fire, it should be inspected. *ITS THE LAW...* all fires are to be reported.
- The fire is confined to a small area, such as in a wastebasket, and it is not spreading (getting bigger). A portable fire extinguisher is no match for a large or rapidly advancing fire.

- Your back is towards an unobstructed exit, to which the fire will not spread. You must always assume that you may not be able to extinguish the fire you are fighting. If the fire doesn’t diminish with your first attack, or if anything goes wrong, leave immediately and do not return.
- The room is not filled with smoke. Firefighters wear protective breathing equipment, because of the dangers of smoke inhalation. Without protection, you may quickly find yourself unable to breath or see.

---

**Instructor Information**

- Hotel fires are more complex than many other occupancies, because of:
  1) their high-occupancy load
  2) the tenant’s unfamiliarity with the building
  3) the fact that many tenants may not speak English and may have difficulty understanding oral or written directions

- The major causes of fires in hotels/motels are smoking materials, electrical, cooking fires, and arson.

- Common fire and life safety hazards to watch for include:
  missing or broken fire safety equipment
  accumulated trash
  open fire doors
  locked exit doors
  blocked stairways
  broken out exit lights

- Many major hotel fires have shared several characteristics of human error:
  1) delayed notification of the fire department
  2) delayed notification of guests
  3) uncorrected hazards (electrical, cigarette in mattress, etc.)
• Critical fire and life safety emergency features:
  1) Smoke detectors in every room save occupant’s lives. If a fire starts in a guest’s room, the occupant has, on average, two minutes to get out alive. A smoke detector will give the necessary warning to facilitate escape.
  2) Self-closing doors (fire doors, stairwell doors) save lives by confining the smoke, flames, and heat which leaves the evacuation clear. It is imperative that these doors are not blocked or propped open.
  3) Sprinklers work to limit fire spread to the room of fire origin. Ninety-six percent of fumes in which automatic sprinklers are present are extinguished or contained by three or fewer sprinkler heads. There has been no multiple loss of life in the United States in buildings where sprinklers were functioning correctly.

• Prior to your program, become familiar with your facility’s fire and life safety systems. Know which of the following your hotel/motel has, as well as their location and use:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manual pull alarms</th>
<th>Fire extinguishers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smoke detectors</td>
<td>Fire alarm monitoring service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exit doors &amp; stairwells</td>
<td>Voice alarm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sprinklers</td>
<td>Fire doors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• It is important for your hotel/motel to have a fire and life safety emergency plan. It’s not difficult, just a well thought out plan that takes into consideration the unique features of each building and its occupants. This plan should be in writing, and easily available to all employees. This includes those who work weekends and off-shifts. The plan should be kept current through periodic updating. For further information on developing your own fire and life safety emergency plan, refer to the packet included with this program.

• It is imperative that every alarm is treated as through it is a real emergency, even if the initial source is unknown. If the alarm sound, or a fire is suspected, call the Fire Department immediately. After calling the Fire Department, if you determine that there is no fire, but rather a malfunction of your equipment or a false alarm, call 911 and relay this information. Never wait to investigate the situation before notifying the Fire Department. Any delay will allow a fire to grow and further endanger the building occupants and property.

DO NOT silence the alarm until given permission to do so by Fire Department personnel or by the emergency operator. DO NOT reset the alarm until the Fire Department arrives and has investigated the source of the alarm. All fire alarms are to be investigated by the Fire Department.

• Whenever you need the assistance of police, fire or emergency medical personnel, you only need to remember one phone number - 911. It’s important for employees calling 911 to be able to give the following information: nature of the problem, location, address, nearest cross street, any specifics known. The caller should not hang up until told to do so by the emergency operator.

• Close doors when exiting. By closing doors, you help limit the spread of smoke and fire throughout the building. Doors should be closed by employees as they leave, and by floor wardens assigned to check the floor during an alarm.
• Elevators should never be used by building occupants during a fire emergency. The reason is three-fold: 1) elevators often fail during a fire, trapping occupants; 2) elevator shafts may fill with smoke; and 3) the elevator needs to be available for the use of arriving firefighters. Occupants must exit by way of stairwells only. For information on evacuation procedures for non-ambulatory persons, refer to the Fire Evacuation Procedures For Persons Unable To Use Exit Stairwells found in developing your own Fire/Life Safety Emergency Plan handout.

• It is important to establish an employee meeting place so that all employees can be accounted for after a building evacuation. The meeting place needs to be away from the building, both so that the area is clear for arriving Fire Department personnel and also so that occupants are away from any glass or debris that may fall from the building.

• If guests, tenants, or employees are unable to leave the building, create an area of refuge:
  
  **Seal the room.** Use wet cloth to stuff around cracks in doors and seal up vents to protect against smoke.

  **Do not break windows.** Flames and smoke can come back in from the outside. If you need air, open the window a crack.

  **Stay low under the smoke.** The freshest air is near the floor. Keep a wet cloth over your nose and mouth; breath through your nose only.

  **Signal for help.** Use the telephone, or hang something in the window.

• Fire Code requirements specify the size, number and location of fire extinguishers within your facility. These requirements help establish a protection level appropriate for the hazard class of your building. Make sure you know the types, sizes and maintenance requirements of your extinguishers, as well as the basics of extinguisher operation.

• The Public Education Section of the Fire Prevention Division provides assistance in evacuation planning, as well as resources for training staff and building residents. Call the Public Education Office, during business hours at 823-3720.

*Thank you for taking responsibility for the safety of your facility and its guests!*
FIRE PREVENTION SAVES LIVES

YOUR SAFETY IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!

Portland Fire & Rescue * (503) 823-3741 * Fire Prevention Division