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NEWPORT NEWS FIRE DEPARTMENT
K. L. JONES, FIRE CHIEF

PRESS RELEASE



**Commission on
Fire Accreditation
International**

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NEWPORT NEWS FIRE DEPARTMENT URGES BUSINESSES TO PRACTICE FIRE SAFETY

NEWPORT NEWS, September 9, 2009— In response to recent local businesses fires, the Newport News Fire Department is reminding everyone to practice fire safety in the workplace by following these guidelines:

Know your building: Become familiar with your workplace. You should know the layout of the building and be aware of all the exits, not just the closest one to your office or station. You should know whether the building has the following and the location of these devices: manual pull alarms, smoke detectors, exit doors and stairwells, sprinklers, fire extinguishers, fire alarm monitoring device, and fire doors.

Designate someone to check the building before closing: Assign employee(s) to go through each area of the workplace to make sure that everything is turned off or unplugged before closing for the day. Know your buildings codes and policies on whether space heaters, coffee pots, heat plates, candles, etc. are allowed. These items are fire hazards.

Inspect equipment: Ensure that equipment works properly and that electrical cords are not frayed.

Have a plan: Building supervisors should make sure that their business has an emergency evacuation plan. All areas of egress should be free of clutter and exits should be clearly marked. Have regular drills with employees to ensure everyone can exit safely. Assist employees with disabilities in developing their exit strategies. Arrange fire extinguisher training for your employees. Treat every alarm as a real emergency. All employee(s) should participate. In addition, invest in a fire safe to keep important business documents, or consider offsite data storage for important information. Using back-up devices such as flash drives and zip drives can save valuable information as well.

Practice safe housekeeping: Clutter can add to a fire load. Make sure that all garbage and packing materials are removed promptly. It is important to store flammable materials properly. A clean, uncluttered business is more fire safe. In the event you do have a fire, keeping the building free of clutter assists our Firefighters in suppressing the fire and provides for their safety as well.

If you need any additional information, please call the Newport News Fire Department's Public Education Office at (757) 926-8404 or visit our website at www.nngov.com/fire.

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