

# Catawba County Emergency Medical Services Standard Operating Guidelines

## Fire Prevention Plan

### Purpose:

Our written program is easy to administer and all employees must be confident and knowledgeable in the role they play in the event of an emergency situation. OSHA standards require our organization to provide properly maintained, marked, illuminated exits; appropriate fire fighting equipment; written emergency plans that provide safe emergency evacuation; and, employee training to prevent fire deaths and injuries in the workplace. Our plan has been developed and written in order to inform all employees of what to do in case of a fire or an evacuation of the building. All employees shall be responsible for knowing the location of fire extinguishers, fire exits, and evacuation plans for both employees and visitors. Throughout your work shift, please keep in mind those employees or visitors that may need special assistance in the event of an emergency evacuation.

### General Safety:

The following are accepted policies and procedures that must be followed by all employees to reduce the possibility of fire:

- Company policy prohibits smoking only in designated areas, which is to be designated by the individual agency.
- All equipment in the building will be properly maintained to prevent possible fires;
  - The equipment will also be routinely inspected to ensure no frayed cords or other potential safety hazards which could contribute to a fire;
  - Heat producing equipment such as hot water heaters, stoves, toaster ovens, etc., must be properly maintained and kept clean of accumulations of combustible materials;
  - Combustibles are not to be stored close to these pieces of equipment or in the hot water heater room;
- Multiple electrical outlet devices must be plugged in UL-approved surge protectors with appropriate circuit breakers;
- Coffee makers must be turned off at the end of each working day;
- Birthday or special occasion cakes with lighted candles must be monitored at all times;
- Wastepaper products must be removed daily from all work areas;
- Flammable sprays, disinfectants, and other solutions must be stored in designated cabinets and areas;
- Aerosol cans become bombs if overheated, so keep away from heat and ignition sources.

### Electrical Safety:

Keep storage at least 36" from the front of any electrical panel (fuse box). The use of extension cords, gang-boxes, and "cheater plugs" are prohibited. The use of these devices has been linked to fires in structures due to the overloading of circuits installed to handle much lower loads. When absolutely necessary, the utilization of commercially available UL-approved surge protectors, which offer built-in circuit breakers to protect our equipment as well as to prevent the possibility of an accidental fire from the overloading of the electrical system, may be used. Inspect all cords for hazards before use. Any cord observed with a nick, scrape, or cut shall be immediately removed from use.

### Fire Protection Equipment:

Each base must have a full complement of the proper type of fire extinguisher for the fire hazards present. Extinguishers must be within at least 75' of each other. Our bases are equipped with clearly identified ABC – All Purpose extinguishers throughout the building. The letters represent the type of fire they can extinguish:

A: Represents the typical garbage fire consisting of combustibles, i.e., paper, trash, and wood. Think of the "A" as representing a fire that will burn to an "ASH".

B: Represents the typical combustible liquid fire, i.e., consisting normally of alcohols, paint thinners, grease, oil, oil-based paint, and gasoline. Think of the “B” as representing a fire that will go “BOOM” or will “BLOW UP”.

C: Represents the typical fire consisting of short-circuits and electrical sparks. Think of the “C” as representing a fire that starts with an electric “CURRENT”.

#### Fire Extinguisher Inspection:

Only approved fire extinguishers are permitted to be used in workplaces, and they must be kept in good operating condition. Portable fire extinguishers must be inspected for cylinder integrity annually and hydrostatically tested every five or six years depending on type. All portable fire extinguishers are to be visually inspected each month in addition to the annual maintenance check. Each extinguisher will have a tag displaying the last date of inspection and each inspection will be verified and validated on the tag. You can inspect your ABC All-Purpose Fire Extinguishers by:

- 1) Lifting them off the mounting bracket and feel them for weight – they should be HEAVY.
- 2) Looking at the gauge – it should be in the “*green zone*”. If the unit is not appropriately charged, the extinguisher will not operate properly when activated.
- 3) Tightening the hose. If the hose is loose, it may come off in your hands when activated or the contents may spray wildly.
- 4) Looking in the hose. If the hose is obstructed by chewing gum or trash, the propellant will not be able to force extinguishing material out the hose effectively.
- 5) Ensuring that the pin is securely in place and has not been removed.

If smoke or fire is discovered anywhere on County grounds or in facilities:

- Pull the nearest fire alarm and call 911. Warn others.
- Move away from the area as directed in the evacuation plan. Do not use elevators. Use stairways to leave the building. Do not attempt to retrieve valuables.
- If you have a co-worker in your area that is hearing impaired, sight impaired, or mobility impaired, insure that person (s) is assisted from the building as necessary.

EMS crews should be familiar with the base entrance and exits. Maps of primary and secondary evacuation routes are posted in a prominent location at each base. In the event of a fire all EMS personnel should rapidly but safely evacuate the building via the nearest exit. If applicable the Crew Chief/Supervisor on duty whenever possible be the last to vacate the premises ensuring that all personnel and visitors are safely out of the building.

EMS personnel should whenever possible remove the ambulances from the bays and secure the units away from the building. This will ensure readiness for the service area as well as a place for crews to take shelter during the time frame of the emergency. If it is to be a long duration incident the crews should be relocated to an appropriate location or facility to cover the service area.

In the event the Units cannot be removed (i.e. gas leak in the bay, fire in the bay) then they should be left and the EMS Shift Supervisor should be notified so that crew pull-ups may occur for coverage of that certain service area. Units left in place should at the first opportunity be secured and removed with permission of the Incident Commander on site.

Personnel should meet at the Main entrance driveway for the base at all EMS base locations. This will ensure that a rapid accountability may take place and a plan of action formulated to mitigate this situation. Ambulance units that are removed from the building should be located away from the building in a manner as to not interfere with incoming emergency response vehicle (i.e. Fire units, Law enforcement).

Once clear of the building and accountability has taken place EMS personnel should assist as needed in the mitigation of the hazard and secure the property as needed. EMS supervisor should respond to assist as well as notify the Chain of Command as to the incident in progress.

If a unit is enroute back to the base for any reason it should be notified and rerouted to stand-by at either Hospital or any other appropriate location (i.e. fire department) so that they do not enter the potentially hazardous scene and can cover the service district.

Never attempt to fight a fire larger than wastebasket size. Even a small fire can generate enough smoke to cause serious injury. Never attempt to fight a fire yourself. Call for help. Always stay between the fire and an exit.

Employees are to be instructed on the hazards of fighting fire, how to properly operate the fire extinguishers available, and what procedures to follow in alerting others to the fire emergency.

The PASS method approved by the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) has been recommended and should be taught:

- P = PULL the pin
- A = Aim the hose
- S = Squeeze the handle together to expel extinguisher's Content
- S = Sweep the hose back and forth through the base of the fire – NOT INTO THE UPPER PARTS OF THE FLAME

Always be sure the fire department inspects the fire site, even if you think you've extinguished the fire.

In the event of a wastebasket or small trashcan, do not direct the stream into the can as this may blow the flaming contents out onto the floor. Rather, start over the can and aim the stream into the backside of the can forcing the contents to stay inside.

If evacuation becomes necessary, an acronym known as RACE can be used:

- R: Rescue any employee, visitor, etc. in the immediate area of the fire;
- A: Alarm all others in the area of the emergency and then call 911 or the Local fire department;
- C: Confine the fire and Contain the smoke by shutting doors and windows as you leave; and finally,
- E: Escape or Extinguish. If at all possible and proper use of portable fire extinguishers is known, fight the fire using the PASS method described above. If the fire is too big or if you have not been trained, escape using the approved routes posted at each base.

If you are aware that someone is trapped in a burning structure, immediately inform the public safety personnel on the scene. Do not re-enter the building. If you are trapped, stay low to the floor as you try to exit. Do not open any doors that feel hot. Use wet towels or clothes to protect yourself from flames and smoke.

If your clothes catch fire, STOP, DROP and ROLL!

All alarms should be taken seriously. If you hear an alarm, evacuate the building.

Know the locations of primary and secondary exit routes and the location of all fire extinguishers at your designated bases.

Training:

Training will be performed initially upon assignment and annually thereafter to all employees of Catawba County EMS.

Remember – fire safety is everyone’s job!

4/7/06 – BDB