

## Environmental, Health & Safety News

### October is Fire Safety Month- How About May!

Within the last week the big news in north-eastern Indiana was an out-of-control fire that completely destroyed five lake front homes and damaged several others. Fire departments from Indiana, Ohio and Michigan were on the scene. Preliminary estimate of the damage was at \$6 - \$8 million dollars. Fortunately no one was seriously injured. Only one of the homes was a year round residence, the others were seasonal cottages. The cause of the fire is still under investigation.

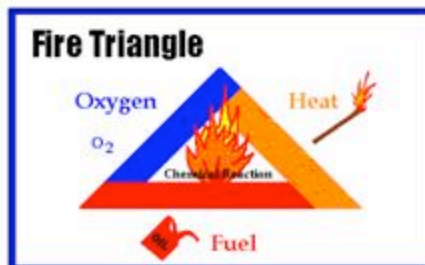
Melinda Nixon from our Muncie Aggregates location suggested a while back that I cover fire safety in this venue. That was after a neighbor was burning leaves and brush along a fence row while doing spring cleanup. The fire got out of control and started across a wooded patch towards a neighbor's house. The fire quickly spread through the dry leaves and ground cover and was about half way to the house that was sitting in the edge of the woods when the volunteer fire department was able to put it out. A much better ending than the first story.

While today (April 29) the chances of a fire spreading in dry leaves and ground cover are remote (at least where I am sitting - it is raining and has been for a couple days) we have had what seems to me to be a lot of high winds this spring. Those high winds can be disastrous when combined with careless use of fire.

I suspect that people from across our five or six state work area can relate similar stories about people's careless and even sometimes intentional use of fire. The results can be devastating! Loss of property and loss of life!

Fire needs three things: Oxygen, fuel and a heat source. Take any one away and the fire stops. Increase any one and the fire intensifies. High winds mean more oxygen.

To stop the fire, the triangle must be broken. Fire extinguishers are made for that purpose. How many people have actually handled an extinguisher? Here are some tips on the proper use of portable fire extinguishers.



**Remember that the primary purpose of a portable fire extinguisher is to help in escaping a fire emergency.**

The safety of people is first and foremost. Some things to consider when and if a fire is encountered:



**Judgment** - Determine the best course of action to take once a fire has been encountered. Sometimes the best course of action is to notify coworkers and others nearby to evacuate the area and leave the fire-fighting to the professionals.

**Communication** - Let others know once the determination has been made to attempt to extinguish the blaze. This will ensure your safety.

**Selection** - Identify the type of fire extinguisher available. Primarily we have ABC type extinguishers that would be appropriate for most any fire that we would encounter in our work places or at our homes.

**Use** - Carefully remove the extinguisher from the wall keeping in mind that it may be heavy. Stand about six feet from the fire and use the NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) **P.A.S.S.** technique.

- **Pull** out the pin that secures the handle.
- **Aim** the extinguisher at the base of the fire.
- **Squeeze** the handle. Do not be startled by the noise or velocity of the agent as it is released.
- **Sweep** the agent stream from side to side across the base of the fire until it is completely out. This has to be done with some accuracy because you will only have seconds until the agent is expelled.

Knowing how to use a fire extinguisher the right way is an important skill, but the best safety practice is to eliminate the need to use the extinguisher in the first place by: practicing good house keeping, thoughtfully considering what could go wrong before starting a fire or using any heat source, and safely storing and handling any fuel source.

*Think Safety All May and We Will Enjoy  
the Start of Summer in June!*

#### **Words of Wisdom!**

"There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work and learning from failure."  
- - Colin Powell

# Irving Materials, Inc.

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### We're Proud of Our Work

**Safety is never an accident:  
it is always the result of  
high intention, sincere ef-  
fort, intelligent direction  
and skillful execution! It  
represents the wise choice  
of many alternatives!!**

## OSHA's/MSHA's Top 10

I recently received a copy of the annual publication of the Indiana Department of Labor, "IN Review". The headline read, "2007: SAFEST YEAR EVER FOR HOOSIER WORKERS".

The Commissioner of Labor for Indiana, Lori Torres, stated that the injury and illness had declined by 42% and fatality rates had decreased by 33% in Indiana over the last decade. That may be slightly better than National statistics but it reflects the overall trend in the improvement of all industries efforts to reduce injuries, illnesses, and fatalities to the workers in the United States.

This has occurred as a result of a number of things; society demands for improvements in worker safety, business owners' recognition of the costs in both dollars and in goodwill of not reducing worker injuries and fatalities, and ever increasing government regulatory involvement in this issue.

A look at the top general industry and construction standards cited by Indiana OSHA and information available on [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov) for national trends show similarities.

- Electrical violations occur on both lists and numerous times.
- Guarding issues make the top 10 several times.
- Hazard communication standard shortfalls resulted in multiple appearances on the lists.

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

please sign below, confirming the material was reviewed:

May 2009

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Thanks to the Indiana Construction Association and their Toolbox Talks for a part of the information used in this newsletter.

- That old stand-by the bench grinder helped to put the *abrasive wheel machinery* on the list of the most cited.
- Head protection was near the top of the list in the construction industry in Indiana but was not on the National list.
- Indiana cited *General Safety and Health Provisions* twice in the construction area. This is something related to the general duty clause for general industry.
- Lockout/tagout appeared on the national list, but not in Indiana.
- Fork trucks and the training required was on the list.
- Manlifts and wearing fall protection was there.

The other most cited standards were for issues that would not normally apply to our operations: scaffolding, trenching, and respiratory protection.

For those of you in our aggregate operations now saying, "what does this have to do with me?"; electrical, guarding and hazard communication are on MSHA's most frequently cited list also.

We all can use this information to perform our workplace hazard assessments. Take the time to look around your workplace. Can you identify any of these issues in your workplace? Don't be reactive and wait for the regulators to show up. Be proactive and find the deficiencies before they show up. It is a lot less painful.



April Showers Bring May Flowers?