

April 2008

RM News & Notes

Tip of the Week:



Fires are classified according to the type of fuel that is burning. If you use the wrong type of extinguisher, you may make the situation worse. Therefore, it is very important to understand the four different fire classifications.



Class A - Wood, paper, cloth, trash, plastics

Solid combustible materials that are not metals.



Class B - Flammable liquids: gasoline, oil, grease, acetone

Any non-metal in a liquid state, on fire. This classification also includes flammable gases



Class C - Electrical: energized electrical equipment

As long as it's "plugged in," it would be considered a class C fire.



Class D - Metals: potassium, sodium, aluminum, magnesium

Unless you work in a laboratory or in an industry that uses these materials, it is unlikely you'll have to deal with a Class D fire. It takes special extinguishing agents (Metal-X, foam) to fight such a fire.

Columbia County Board of Commissioners Risk Management Department

630 Ronald Reagan Drive, Building B
PO Box 498
Evans, Georgia 30809
Fax: 706-868-3301

Darlene M. Bartlett ARM
Risk Manager

706-868-3363

dbartlett@columbiacountyga.gov

Janice A. Matthews CPS/CAP
Risk Management Assistant

706-312-7475

jmatthews@columbiacountyga.gov

Web Page

<http://www.columbiacountyga.gov/home/index.asp?page=2440>

Message from the Risk Manager

I've recently heard a lot of jokes about flaming cakes and fire extinguishers as another birthday rolled around. While the cards were funny, we all know that a real fire emergency is nothing to joke about. I was reminded that it has been a while since we've covered the topic of fire safety and we also need to have some fire extinguisher training. So please take a few minutes and review the content of this newsletter and make sure you are up to date with the fire evacuation plan for your workplace as well as having one planned and practiced for your home. I would also ask the directors and managers to look at the available fire extinguisher training classes listed on page 3 and make sure you have at least one person from each area registered for this valuable training. I hope you never need to use a fire extinguisher, but it is always better to be prepared.

Darlene



Using the **P.A.S.S.** Technique

Pull the pin. This will allow you to discharge the extinguisher.

Aim hose at base of fire. If you aim at the flames (which is frequently the temptation), the extinguishing agent will fly right through and do not good. You want to hit the fuel.

Squeeze the top handle or lever. This depresses a button that releases the pressurized extinguishing agent in the extinguisher.

Sweep from side to side until the fire is completely out. Start using the extinguisher from a safe distance away, and then move forward. Once the fire is out, keep and eye on the area in case it re-ignites.

**Most fire extinguishers are emptied in less than a minute.

Before attempting to fight a fire (no matter how small):

- Make sure everyone is leaving or has left the building
- Call 911 and/or pull fire alarm
- Do not attempt to fight a large fire.
- Always leave yourself a way out. Make sure there is a clear, unobstructed escape route. Keep your back to an exit.
- If the fire starts to spread or threatens the escape route, leave immediately.

Fire extinguishers save lives and protect property.

Poor maintenance and incorrect usage of fire extinguishers in the home are two key reasons small house fires can spread endangering lives and causing considerable damage to property.

House fires can be brought under control within the first few minutes of ignition if attended to correctly with an extinguisher that is well maintained and can buy valuable time before the fire department arrives.

Homeowners follow the tips below to ensure correct usage and maintenance of extinguishers in the home.

Ensure everyone in the home knows the location of the extinguisher and how to use it.

Safety tips:

- Use a portable fire extinguisher when the fire is confined to a small area, such as a wastebasket, and is not growing; everyone has exited the building; the fire department has been called or is being called; and the room is not filled with smoke.
- For the home, select a multi-purpose extinguisher (can be used on all types of home fires) that is large enough to put out a small fire, but not so heavy as to be difficult to handle.
- Choose a fire extinguisher that carries the label of an independent testing laboratory.
- Read the instructions that come with the fire extinguisher and become familiar with its parts and operation before a fire breaks out. Local fire departments or fire equipment distributors often offer hands-on fire extinguisher trainings.
- Install fire extinguishers close to an exit and keep your back to a clear exit when you use the device so you can make an easy escape if the fire cannot be controlled. If the room fills with smoke, leave immediately.
- Know when to go. Fire extinguishers are one element of a fire response plan, but the primary element is safe escape. Every household should have a home fire escape plan and working smoke alarms.

RUN AWAY

I was in a hurry to get to work but needed to stop off at the mailbox. I was just dropping in my bills when, out of the corner of my eye, I noticed movement. I turned my head and to my horror, the car was moving. I had evidently neglected to put the car in park. The driver's door was still open and it was moving slowly so I figured I could jump in and apply the brake.

Not so! I almost made it inside when the car picked up speed. I was thrown down and could have been run over. I ended up rolling down the hill, skidding along the side of the road, over a curb and finally sliding down the sidewalk while watching my car rapidly proceed down hill, through the neighbor's bushes, hitting one car and causing that car to slide into the second car in his driveway. Thank God there were no children waiting on that corner for the school bus. Three cars wrecked and half my skin off the left side of my body with blood running down, I had to go knock on the neighbor's door. He moved a few months later! It took me many months to overcome that experience. Now I remind myself quite often to SLOW DOWN!

Up Coming Events

Each program is advertised by Risk Management and is available to employees of Columbia County Board of Commissioners and the city employees of Grovetown and Harlem. Additionally, the Defensive Driving Courses may be attended by immediate family members of employees, on a space available basis, for a nominal fee.

Pre-registration is required.

For additional information or to register contact Risk Management. 706-312-7475

Safety Review Board April 17, 2008

Fire Extinguisher Training May 7, 2008 9:00

(Each class 40 minutes: classroom and hands on training) **10:00 11:00**

Defensive Driving Course – 8 hour May 8, 2008 May 27, 2008 June 26, 2008

Defensive Driving Course – 4 hour June 5, 2008

CPR/AED/First Aid April 29, 2008

County Office Closed May 26, 2008

APRIL 2008

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Newsy Notes

Did you know?

Columbia County Board of Commissioners is a member of the National Safety Council. As an employee, you are covered under this membership and entitled to *Safety & Health* magazine as well as other benefits – **free of charge**. If interested, you will need to contact Risk Management for a member identification number and then log in to <http://members.nsc.org> to sign up.



NSC.org

Educate and influence people to prevent accidental injury and death