

SIMPLY SAFE **September 2010**

HUMAN BEHAVIOUR IN FIRE

Why is Fire Training so Important?

Involvement in a fire may be someone's first experience of immediate personal danger. It is impossible to predict how a person or groups of people will react to this danger as everyone will behave differently.

The more frequently people receive training in what to do when a fire occurs and take part in fire drills, the more likely they are, in the event of an actual occurrence to act rationally, to help others and to remember to raise the alarm. In addition, the more familiar a person is with the layout of the building and the escape routes, the more likely it is that person will attempt to move through smoke in the knowledge that a place of safety is only a short distance away. Training may also help to subdue the individual's desire for self preservation at the expense of others.

DID YOU KNOW? - Some people are unwilling to travel through a smoked filled area even if they know there is an exit within reach. The maximum distance that persons will travel through smoke is normally six metres.

FACT The training that persons have undergone and their knowledge of the layout of the building can affect this factor.

DID YOU KNOW? People do not treat the dangers of fire with the respect it deserves. Disbelief, complacency, curiosity, and other forms of irrational behaviour often occur. It is only when the danger e.g. of smoke or fire encroach upon their personal boundary line that people perceive that they are at risk.

FACT – If people do not respond quickly enough to the dangers of fire, they can be overtaken by the speed of fire.



Human behaviour in a fire is varied and complex, however when confronted by a fire a well disciplined and well trained work force should automatically raise the alarm, ensure that the Fire and Rescue service is called and evacuate the building far more effectively than a team without the correct knowledge of evacuation procedures.

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FIRE DRILLS – make yours more effective

Individuals who have participated in drills and received training in emergency response react faster and with better decision making than those without training.

Human behaviour has been recognised as a factor in the loss of life in fires for many years.

Planning and training directly influence the outcome of an emergency situation.

FIRE DRILLS – a fresh approach

- For whatever reason they are conducted, fire drills serve to educate building occupants, assist in the evaluation of emergency plans, and identify potential issues with the building's means of egress.
- For drills to be safe and provide participants with the desired learning experience, they should be planned in advance.
- Announced drills should be structured learning exercises where occupants walk through the actions they are to take when the evacuation alarm sounds. They will provide participants with the desired learning experience, when planned in advance.
- Although the surprise drill might be considered to be disruptive, it is the best indication of what will occur under actual emergency conditions.
- Drills should be conducted at various times and on all shifts to evaluate the reaction of all employees.



TOP TIPS - Involve your team.....

- **Film the drill** - play it back. Were procedures followed?
- **Nominate observers** to assess the appropriateness of actions.
- **Vary each drill** - get people to escape through routes which they are less familiar with.
- **Pretend to be a fire** - someone who's the fire stands in a main exit route – Don't let anyone through!
- **Hide someone** - are they missed?
- **Task team members** in organising the drill. More involvement = More responsibility will be taken.
- **Analyse each drill** - make improvements

A TO Z OF FOOD SAFETY

X – CONTAMINATION is the transfer of bacteria from foods (usually raw) to other foods. The bacteria can be transferred directly when one food touches or drips onto another, or indirectly, for example from hands, equipment, work surfaces, knives, or other utensils. Cross-contamination is one of the major causes of food poisoning.