

# Section 3

## Fire Safety and Incident Reports



**After completing this section, the learner will be able to:**



Demonstrate the correct method of using a fire blanket and fire fighting equipment.



Participate in a fire drill following procedures correctly.



Describe the procedures to be taken following an accident including completion of the appropriate documentation and knowledge of roles and responsibilities.



## **Fire safety and incident reports**

### **Vocabulary**

Look up explanations for the keywords below.

<b>accidents</b>	<b>accident and incident reports</b>	<b>assembly points</b>	<b>authority</b>
<b>carbon dioxide</b>	<b>evacuation procedures</b>	<b>extinguishers</b>	<b>reusable</b>
<b>fatally injured</b>	<b>flammable</b>	<b>ignition</b>	<b>investigated</b>
<b>occurrence</b>	<b>responsibility</b>	<b>communicate</b>	<b>fatalities</b>



## Fire safety and incident reports

In this section of the manual, the following topics will be discussed

- ✓ Fire safety
- ✓ Incident reports

### Fire

#### Some fire statistics

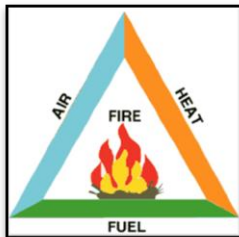
- Around 50 people die every year in the Republic of Ireland from fires, mostly in their own homes
- Most at risk are the under-12s and over-60s
- Most fire fatalities occur during winter
- Most deaths by fire occur in homes with no fire alarms
- Over 50% of fires in the home occur at night (8pm – 8am)
- Most fires start in the living room or bed room

As these statistics show, fire causes many injuries and deaths each year. Employers must make every effort to guard against the outbreak of fire. They must also take measures to protect people's safety if fire breaks out. All businesses should have a fire safety management system that is based around these three stages.



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## What is fire?



Fire is a chemical reaction, which needs three things in order to occur:

- ✓ Air
- ✓ Heat
- ✓ Fuel

If one of these is not present, the fire cannot start. If one of these is taken from a fire, it will go out.









Fuels and other materials become extremely hot when burning, and are therefore extremely dangerous. The table below shows the temperatures that some types of fuels reach when they burn.

Fuel	°C	Fuel	°C
Methane	580	Natural gas	600
Peat	227	Petroleum	400
Propane	480	Wood	300
Coal	300	Butane	420
Carbon	700	Carbon monoxide	300
Coke	700	Ethane	515
Hydrogen	500		

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## Types of fire

Fires are divided into four classes. These are detailed in this table.

Class	Symbol	Description
		Class A fires involve solid materials of an organic nature ( <i>such as wood, paper, cloth or rubber</i> ) and plastics that do not melt.
		Class B fires involves liquids such as petrol, diesel, thinners, oils, paints, wax, cooking fat and plastics that melt.
		Class C fires involve electricity.
		Class D fires involve flammable metals such as magnesium, aluminium, titanium, sodium and potassium.

## Fire precautions

Employers need to ensure that:

- ✓ all employees know what to do in the event of a fire
- ✓ escape routes are clearly marked and assembly points are easily identifiable
- ✓ everybody knows the evacuation procedures very well and get regular practice in using them
- ✓ all fire-fighting equipment is regularly inspected (*for example, smoke detectors, fire alarms, fire doors*)
- ✓ fire safety certificates are issued for all new buildings and for most renovations or extensions to business premises
- ✓ there is emergency lighting and fire-fighting equipment.

## Identifying sources of ignition



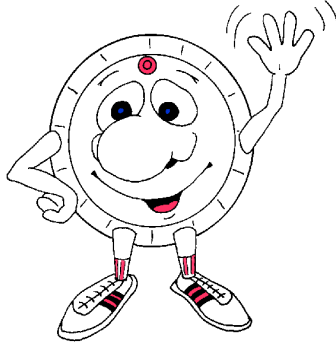
It is important to identify any potential ignition sources in any premises. Look for possible sources of heat, which may get hot enough to set anything on fire.

These sources of heat include the following.

- ✓ Electrical, gas or oil-fired heaters
- ✓ Hot processes, for example, welding or the use of Bunsen burners
- ✓ Cooking equipment, hot ducting, flues and filters, naked flames
- ✓ Poor electrical installation, including overloaded or damaged cables
- ✓ Chemicals
- ✓ Cigarettes, matches, lighters
- ✓ Light fittings and lighting equipment
- ✓ Obstruction of equipment ventilation

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## Detectors and alarms



Fire detectors and alarms are necessary in many situations. In addition, law requires them. They are especially important in places where:

- ✓ fires could break out without being detected
- ✓ students, staff or visitors to the workplace are isolated and may not be aware of incidents elsewhere in the building
- ✓ there is risk of rapid fire spread
- ✓ evacuation of large numbers of people is required
- ✓ the means of escape are not ideal
- ✓ the building type makes exit difficult or impossible
- ✓ there are legal requirements for such fire equipment.

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### Activity









Smoking was banned from the workplace in 2004. Does this make the workplace healthier and safer? Discuss this with your group.

## Fire protection equipment

### Classification of fuels

It is very important to understand the six different classifications of fuel. Not all fuels are the same. If the wrong type of fire extinguisher is used on the wrong type of fuel, it can be very dangerous.

Fuel class		Examples
A	 General combustibles	Wood, paper, cloth, plastic
B	 Flammable liquids	Petrol, kerosene, oil, grease, acetone, paint
C	 Flammable gasses	LPG, butane, acetylene, and hydrogen
D	 Metals	Potassium, sodium, aluminium, magnesium
E	 Electrical	Fires involving live electrical equipment. Once it is 'plugged in,' it is considered a class (E) fire.
F	 Oil or fat	Cooking oil

**Note:** It takes special extinguishing agents (Pyromet L2 for Lithium, Pyromet PDMC, foam for others) to fight this type of fire.







## Fire extinguishers



There are four types of extinguishers in general use.

Extinguisher type	Extinguishes fires fuelled by
Water	Wood, paper, fabrics
Foam	Flammable, liquids, oils, fats
Powder	All fires including electrical
Carbon dioxide	Flammable liquids, electrical

Example – Extinguisher and Types of Fire

Extinguisher		Type of Fire				
Colour	Type	Solids (wood, paper, cloth, etc)	Flammable Liquids	Flammable Gases	Electrical Equipment	Cooking Oils & Fats
	Water	✓ Yes	✗ No	✗ No	✗ No	✗ No
	Foam	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✗ No	✗ No	✓ Yes
	Dry Powder	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✗ No
	Carbon Dioxide (CO <sub>2</sub> )	✗ No	✓ Yes	✗ No	✓ Yes	✓ Yes

## Activity



Complete this table by identifying the class of fire for each burning material.

Burning material	Fire type			
	A	B	C	D
Wood	✓			
Petrol				
Wax				
A television				
Manganese				
Paint stripper				

## Activity



Answer these questions and explain your answer.

1. Would you use water on a type C fire?

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2. Would you use water on a chip pan fire?

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Most fire extinguishers will have a pictograph label showing which fuel the extinguisher is designed to fight. For example, a simple water extinguisher might have a label like the one below, indicating that it should only be used on Class A fuels.



## How to use a fire extinguisher

It is easy to remember how to use a fire extinguisher by using the acronym **PASS**, which stands for **P**ull, **A**im, **S**queeze, and **S**weep.

<b>P</b>		<b>Pull the pin</b>	Pulling the pin allows you to discharge the extinguisher.
<b>A</b>		<b>Aim at the base of the fire</b>	Aim at the base of the fire as you want to hit the fuel. If you aim at the flames ( <i>which is frequently the temptation</i> ), the extinguishing agent will fly right through and do no good.
<b>S</b>		<b>Squeeze the top handle or lever</b>	Squeezing the handle or lever depresses a button that releases the pressurised extinguishing agent.
<b>S</b>		<b>Sweep from side to side</b>	Sweep from side to side until the fire is completely out.

Always start using an extinguisher from a safe distance away. Then move forward. Once the fire is out, keep an eye on the area in case it re-ignites.

Always test the extinguisher briefly.

## Fire blankets



Fire blankets are used to cover small fires in order to exclude the oxygen. They come in a self-contained sleeve.

They are used on **Class A, B and D** fires. They can be used on oil and fat fires or to wrap around a casualty.

### Using a fire blanket

The following are general instructions for using a fire blanket.

- ✓ Read the instruction plate before you use the blanket
- ✓ Ensure that you are positioned between the fire and a safe exit/escape route
- ✓ Pull the tapes to remove the blanket from the container
- ✓ Hold the blanket by the tapes and cover the burning material completely (*using the blanket to shield your face and hands*)
- ✓ Leave to cool for at least 30 minutes, keeping yourself out of smoke



## Evacuating during a fire



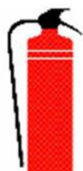
Follow these guidelines if an evacuation needs to take place.

- ✓ Do not panic
- ✓ If you discover a fire immediately raise the alarm by breaking glass on a fire alarm box which (*located at regular intervals around the building*)
- ✓ Contact the Emergency Services – dial 999. Clearly state that you need the Emergency Fire Service, state also your location and name
- ✓ Turn off the electrical or gas supply and equipment (*if it is safe to do so*)
- ✓ Immediately evacuate the building using the nearest emergency exit
- ✓ Close all doors and windows behind you if it is safe to do so
- ✓ Do not collect personal belongings
- ✓ Do not use lifts
- ✓ Do go to the nearest assembly point by the safest route
- ✓ Do not return to the building until told by your manager/safety officer that it is safe to do so

## Activity



Using this table, match the different types of fires with the type of fire extinguisher needed to put out the fire.



WATER



POWDER



FOAM



CARBON DIOXIDE  
(CO<sub>2</sub>)

Paper and wood	Flammable liquids	Electrical hazard
Flammable gases	Oils and fats	Chemicals

## Activity



Design a graphic poster (*using only images*) on how to use a fire extinguisher and a fire blanket.

## Activity



Find out about the fire evacuation procedures in your workplace. Where is your nearest assembly point? Make some notes here.

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## Activity



Fire kills, often very quickly. It is important to know exactly what to do if a fire breaks out. Lives may depend on it.

Read the fire notice directions below then indicate, by using a check, whether the points of advice are correct or incorrect.

Are these directions <b>Correct</b> or <b>Incorrect</b> ?		
	<b>Correct</b>	<b>Incorrect</b>
If you discover a fire, first try to extinguish it		
Shut all the doors		
Press the alarm gently – so as not to damage it		
You can get out through a window if you want		
Take anything important with you		
Once out, find somewhere safe to wait		
Return to the building when you think it is safe		



## Activity



### Work on your memory

How can I remember the colours of fire extinguishers and their different uses? Here are two memory tricks you can use.

#### 1 – Mnemonics

*(a pattern of letters, ideas, or associations that helps you to remember something)*

If you like playing around with words, make up a **mnemonic**. For example:

- ✓ CO<sub>2</sub> is as **black** as **COAL**
- ✓ H<sub>2</sub>O (Water) is **ONLY** for Class A fires

#### 2 – Mind maps

If you think in pictures, draw a **mind map**. Look for connections that you may not have noticed before:

- ✓ Water and foam are both 'wet' and no good for electrical fires
- ✓ CO<sub>2</sub> is a **gas** but is used on flammable **liquids**
- ✓ Powder is suitable for 4 fire classes

## Activity



Go to <http://www.hsa.ie>.

Print the fire safety check sheet. Using this sheet carry out a fire risk assessment of your workplace or familiar environment.

# Incident reports



Every accident scenario has one thing in common – **people are involved.**

Accidents affect:

- ✓ The person who has the accident
- ✓ The organisation where the accident happened
- ✓ The people or person directly responsible
- ✓ Working team or group



This table lists the **effects** of accidents on people and organisations.

Effects on the person	Financial effects	Effects on organisation
Pain, suffering and guilt	Disability pensions, death benefits and compensation	Extra work - training, writing reports, meetings
Loss of earnings	Loss of contracts or reputation	Loss of credibility, reputation or status
Shock and lives deeply affected, requiring counseling and support	Replacement of materials or equipment	Loss of a trained skilled experienced worker
Extra expense	Insurance costs	Time lost by the worker
Disability / Inability to work	Legal action costs	Time lost by others out of sympathy or curiosity
Unable to take up leisure activities/low self-esteem	Social welfare expense	Time lost due to resulting discussions and meetings
Depending on friends and family	Hospital and health care	Time lost by people investigating the accident
Fear, anger, anxiety	Damage to materials or equipment	Low morale, with effects on work rate and motivation
Personal grief	Loss of earnings	Working days lost

## Importance of reporting an accident

All workplaces should have an agreed procedure for reporting accidents, incidents or dangerous occurrences.

This is important for many reasons.

- ✓ Ensures safe and well-considered reactions to accidents at work, including the most minor
- ✓ It is good practice to always write a report
- ✓ The accident, its causes and any subsequent injuries are clearly reported
- ✓ Such reports assist managers in considering how future accidents can be avoided

It is also essential to report any dangerous occurrences that do not result in any injury. It is extremely valuable to examine these near misses. That is how industries such as airlines prepare safe evacuation and safe working procedures.

## Who is responsible for notifying accidents to the HSA?



All accidents that result in a fatality or in the loss of more than three days' work **MUST** be reported to the Health and Safety Authority (HSA). The HSA inspectors fully investigate these accidents.

The formal recording of workplace accidents helps the HSA to compile accurate statistics on the range and occurrence of accidents at work.

This table lists the people responsible for reporting an accident in different cases, depending on who is injured.

Who is injured	Who is responsible for reporting the accident
Employee at work	✓ The employer
Self-employed	✓ The person having control of the place of work at which the accident occurred
Member of the public	
Self-employed person is <i>fatally</i> injured	✓ The owner or tenant in the place of work ✓ If the fatally injured person is the tenant or owner of the place of work, the next of kin has responsibility for reporting the accident

### How are accidents reported?

You can report accidents to the HSA in one of the following ways:

- ✓ **By hard copy** - By completing the Incident Report Form (IR1) and posting the completed form to the Workplace Contact Unit, Health and Safety Authority, The Metropolitan Building, James Joyce Street, Dublin
- ✓ **Online** - Via the Health and Safety Authority's website, [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie)

## Completing an incident report form (*accident report or accident record*)

If you witness an accident or a near miss at work, you may be asked to fill in an Incident Report Form (IR1) on online via [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie).

The report form is confidential and must be kept safe. It is a good idea to write it out rough first. It is important that what you write is:

- clear
- to the point
- honest and not biased
- factual.

This diagram displays guidelines for filling in an incident report or accident record.

ACCIDENT RECORD		
<b>1 About the person who had the accident</b> Name _____ Address _____ Postcode _____ Occupation _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Write details in a <b>logical order</b>.</li><li>• Use <b>formal language</b>.</li><li>• Watch your <b>handwriting</b>.</li></ul>	<b>Step 1</b>
<b>2 About you, the person filling in this record</b> If you did not have the accident, write your address and occupation. Name _____ Address _____ Postcode _____ Occupation _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Read through</b> the instructions and the headings before you start to write.</li><li>• Put information in the <b>correct places</b>.</li></ul>	<b>Step 2</b>
<b>3 About the accident</b> Continue on the back of this form if you need to Say when it happened. Date ____ / ____ / ____ Time ____ Say where it happened. State which room or place. _____ Say how the accident happened. Give the cause if you can. _____ _____ _____ _____ If the person who had the accident suffered an injury, say what it was. _____ Please sign and date the record. Signature _____ Date ____ / ____ / ____	<p>This section is where you put the <b>details</b> of the accident. There is not much room to write here so include just the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• relevant facts</li><li>• necessary detail</li></ul>	<b>Step 3</b>
<b>4 For the employer only</b> Complete this box if the accident is reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR) How was it reported? _____ Date reported ____ / ____ / ____ Signature _____	<p><b>Check your writing</b> for any mistakes in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• spelling</li><li>• punctuation</li><li>• language</li></ul>	<b>Step 4</b>

## Describing an incident/accident

When describing an incident/accident, use the following guidelines.

- ✓ Use formal language
- ✓ Make a rough draft
- ✓ Describe events in the order they happened
- ✓ Use complete sentences
- ✓ Do not use slang or inappropriate language

This diagram displays checklist questions and guidelines for describing an incident/accident clearly and accurately.

**Does your writing make sense? Read it out loud or ask a colleague to read it.**

- Include **relevant details** only.
- Stick to the **facts** – not your opinions or feelings.

**Check your writing for any mistakes in**

- spelling
- punctuation
- paragraphs
- language

**3 About the accident. Continue on the back of this form if you need to**

Say when it happened. Date 03 / 02 / 2005 Time 10:15 a.m.

Say where it happened. State which room or place. Production line 6

Say how the accident happened. Give the cause if you can. A box on production line 6 got stuck and jammed the conveyor belt. There was a delay of about a minute before the emergency stop button was pressed. By then two boxes had fallen on Mike's foot. His right ankle was cut and bleeding. I called the first aider and he bandaged Mike's foot. Mike returned to work after 20 minutes.

If the person who had the accident suffered an injury, say what it was. Cut to ankle

Please sign and date the record.

Signature Martin Packer Date 07 / 06 / 2005

- Copy your proof-read writing onto the form.
- Write neatly.
- Have you filled in all the relevant parts?
- Sign the form.
- Read through the form as a final check.
- Keep a photocopy.

## Activity



Read the **Sample Incident Report** immediately beneath this Activity box and answer these questions.

1. Where did the accident happen?

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2. How did the accident happen?

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3. What treatment did the worker receive?

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4. Do you think this accident could have been avoided? Explain.

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Sample Incident Report					
<b>Name:</b>	Joe Ryan	<b>Address:</b>	Bellview, Kilmoy		
<b>Occupation:</b>	Farm Labourer	<b>Date of Birth</b>	29/04/1965		
<b>Sex:</b>	Male	<b>Date/time of accident</b>	6.50 am, 12/08/2008		
<b>Describe the type of work the person was doing at the time of the accident:</b>					
Joe was preparing to bale hay. He was attaching a baler to the 'power take-off shaft' (PTO) of a 1993-registered tractor.					
<b>Describe the environment where the accident took place:</b>					
The accident took place in the yard of Martin McKenna's farm. It was a dry, bright morning. The yard contained a lot of farm machinery.					
<b>Describe what happen at the time of the accident:</b>					
Joe's shirt got caught in the PTO that was running at the time. Joe became entangled in the PTO.					
<b>Describe the injuries incurred:</b>					
Joe received major injuries. He suffered severe abrasions to his chest. His left arm was seriously entangled in the machinery and was later amputated.					
<b>Outline the immediate aid given to the injured person:</b>					
As Joe was working alone, he did not receive aid until the owner, Mr McKenna, heard calls for help. Mr McKenna turned off the tractor. As he was unable to disentangle Mr Ryan, he called for an ambulance. This came thirty minutes later. Medics were able to remove Joe from the machinery. He was taken to St Luke's Hospital, 23 miles away.					
<b>Outline the consequences:</b>					
<b>Fatal:</b>	No	<b>Ambulance / doctor called:</b>	Yes	<b>Hospitalisation:</b>	Yes
<b>Period of absence from work:</b>					
Joe remains on sick leave. It has not been decided if he will be able to return to farm work.					
<b>Details of notifier:</b>			<b>Mr Martin McKenna</b>		
<b>Type / name of business:</b>			<b>Farm</b>		
<b>Today's date</b>			<b>15/08/2008</b>		

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## Activity



Read the 'Accident account' here and complete the blank accident report provided immediately below this Activity box.

### Accident account

Paul Walsh is an apprentice painter working with Brennan's Design. The company was contracted to redecorate a block of a large pharmaceutical company called DCC. Paul's job included carrying 10-litre containers of paint from the company van outside the building. To do this, Paul had to walk up a flight of stairs and through a 'clean area,' where a critical stage of the drug-manufacturing process took place. Everyone entering this area has to wear complete personal protective clothing, including shoe covers.

On the day of the accident, Paul was carrying two 10-litre containers up the stairs. He was carrying one container on each shoulder. He was wearing all the required protective clothing. Paul lost his footing on a step of the stairs and fell. His knee was badly hurt and he has since suffered from acute backache.

Paul received no training from Brennan's Design on how to carry large weights and no training from DCC on working with protective clothing.

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Incident report			
Name:		Address:	
Occupation:		Date of Birth:	
Sex:		Date/time of accident:	
Describe the type of work the person was doing at the time of the accident:			
Describe the environment where the accident took place:			
Describe what happen at the time of the accident:			
Describe the injuries incurred:			
Outline the immediate aid given to the injured person:			
Outline the consequences:			
Fatal:		Ambulance / doctor called:	
		Hospitalisation:	
Period of absence from work:			
Details of notifier:			
Type / name of business:			
Today's date			

## Communicating to others about health and safety



People occasionally need to explain health and safety techniques or procedures. This is especially true if they have responsibility for health and safety in their workplace. People often lack confidence when speaking face to face. This can be because of a lack of experience or awareness of how to communicate in different situations.

If you need to explain important health and safety information to a work colleague, you **must** speak clearly and accurately. It is important to adapt to different people and situations and understand that purpose and audience affects language.

If you have to explain a point of health and safety to a colleague, think first about the following:

**Place** – Where is the best place to talk?

**Purpose** – Who is the person you are talking to and what should they know?

**Content** – What are the essential points you need to cover?

**How** – Give facts in a logical order, emphasise the important points

## Example

Sam is a health and safety representative. His colleague, David, slipped this morning. The following flow chart displays the steps taken by Sam to communicate with David.

### Sam's thoughts

I don't know this person very well

I need to explain that reporting near misses is really important

It's really important that he reports it as a near miss.

How can I check that he understands me?

### Sam's words

Hi. Can we sit down for a minute while it's quiet?

I'd like to talk to you about what happened this morning when you almost slipped over.

If you report the incident as a near miss, we can learn from it and help prevent accidents from happening in the future

Do you understand what a near miss is? Would you like me to run through that again?

#### Place

Where is the best place to talk with David?

#### Purpose

What does David need to know?

#### Content

Include important points.  
Give reasons or examples but avoid unnecessary details.

#### How

How do I speak?  
Has David understood?



## Fire safety and incident reports - Worksheet 1 – Word search

Find the 10 words listed in this word search.

n	y	e	a	u	t	h	o	r	i	t	y	e	z
r	e	s	p	o	n	s	i	b	i	l	i	t	y
h	o	x	m	f	r	m	e	q	z	y	q	a	h
c	g	e	t	w	a	c	s	p	h	j	d	g	g
b	w	y	v	i	i	t	f	g	j	o	e	i	b
w	i	f	r	a	n	b	a	v	m	t	f	t	c
h	n	n	e	d	c	g	m	l	y	s	x	s	y
r	j	d	p	l	o	u	u	r	l	n	c	e	o
k	u	e	o	w	n	z	a	i	j	y	z	v	d
c	r	g	r	j	r	a	h	t	s	q	x	n	y
o	y	p	t	w	b	p	d	m	i	h	x	i	c
r	y	i	n	c	i	d	e	n	t	o	e	b	a
a	c	c	i	d	e	n	t	s	w	v	n	r	t
y	p	x	b	z	c	d	k	i	m	k	s	h	s

accidents  
responsibility  
authority  
fatally  
injury  
evacuation  
incident  
report  
investigate  
extinguisher



## Fire safety and incident reports - Worksheet 2 – Vocabulary



1. Fill in the missing words in the paragraph below using the words in the box.

responsibility   flammable   injured   assembly   routes   evacuation

It is essential that every workplace has clear \_\_\_\_ procedure so that, in the case of fire, no one is ever \_\_\_\_\_. It is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the employer to make sure these procedures are in place. It is also his/her responsibility to make sure that people know where the \_\_\_\_\_ points and \_\_\_\_\_ routes are, and that they have had practice in evacuating the building. Certain materials are extremely \_\_\_\_\_.



## Fire safety and incident reports - Worksheet 3 – Quiz and activity

1. Name the four categories of fire. What materials does each one involve?

Fire category	Materials

2. List some of the ways accidents can affect people and organisations.

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3. Name the four types of extinguishers and briefly describe what each one extinguishes.

Extinguisher type	Extinguishes fires fuelled by



4. List some guidelines for using a fire blanket.

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5. What are the two ways in which you can report a dangerous occurrence or accident to the HSA?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

6. Who is responsible for reporting accidents in the workplace? Identify the right persons by filling in this table.

Who is injured	Who is responsible for reporting the accident
Employee at work	
Employer	
Member of the public	
Self-employed person is <i>fatally</i> injured	

7. Bring to class any accident report forms relevant to your own workplace and complete them with your group.