



IECRM SAFETY FORUM
Fire Safety and Prevention at Home and in the Workplace

Wednesday, August 26, 2020

7:30 AM - 8:30 AM

Hosted by IECRM

Safety Forums are held monthly.

Upcoming Safety Forum Dates: September 30, 7:30 AM.

Member Forums will be scheduled monthly. Please watch your inbox for future dates.

Upcoming Member Forum Dates: September 2, 7:30 AM.

Watch the [VIDEO RECORDING](#) of today's safety forum. It will also be sent out through IECRM Membership communications. If you are not currently receiving these important emails, let us know at info@iecrm.org.

SAFETY FORUM RECAP

Subject Matter Experts included:

- Paul Lingo, Training Director, IECRM
- Dustin Green, Safety Manager, Integrity Electrical Solutions

Near Misses-when something is prevented by the safety procedures in place. It is important to have safety protocols in place to help prevent fires and diminish "near misses."

Question: Has anyone had any near misses?

- Wearing masks and safety glasses at the same time-glasses fog up. It becomes a safety issue.
- Suggestions: face shields, anti-fog spray, possibly using face shields instead, putting baby shampoo on glasses to prevent fogging

Bryan Beckett has products that can help with this issue.

Anti-fogging safety glasses and branded masks that are more compressed to prevent fogging.

Contact Info: Beckett-bryan@office-sensei.com, www.IECPrideStore.com

Fire Awareness and Prevention in the Home and Workplace

- High risk of fire when dry cardboard is sitting in the sun
- Be cognizant of the risks of this time of year. Fires are very prevalent right now.
- Storms can wreak havoc when we are not taking the proper precautions to ensure that all flammable items are disposed of properly.



IECRM SAFETY FORUM

Fire Safety and Prevention at Home and in the Workplace

Examples:

1. Last week on a project, someone put a cigarette in the “**Butt Can**” and it caught on fire and burnt a piece of the construction fence. This is evidence of someone doing the right thing, and it still wasn’t enough. Make sure that your cigarette is extinguished as you put it in the can.
2. On an apartment project the HVAC Contractor left their **empty boxes** (from condensing units) on the roof for a month, and someone must have flipped a cigarette butt into the pile, and it cost over \$100,00 worth of damage. Simply cleaning up when the job was complete could’ve saved money and time on the project, much less the bad press in the neighborhood for a construction project catching on fire right next door.
3. Not all fires are caused by cigarette disposal. Do you remember the apartment complex in downtown Denver a couple of years ago that went up in flames in about 15 minutes? The rumor was that it started from a spark from the welder into the elevator shaft. Just normal work and the fire watch missed it and it killed a couple of people, injured quite a few, and displaced residents from their homes for weeks. Normal activities can wreak havoc on the normal life of someone else that had nothing to do with the issue.
4. Then we have Mother Nature throwing curveballs with lightning and dry air. Dryer air creates more static electricity and causes more electrical storms. We can make sure that we keep any dead tree limbs off of our homes/businesses or pick up combustible trash that could become fuel during a storm.

Fire Safety During COVID-19

- Due to the pandemic, there are a lot of people that are working from home that used to work outside of the home.
 - Working from home has caused many to take shortcuts to “set up their home office.”
 - Misusing extension cords-If you are attaching one cord into another cord-you are ruining the rating of that cord. Example: If you need a 100-foot extension cord, but only have two 50-foot extension cords, the “make-shift 100 ft. cord” is no longer a UL rated extension cord.
 - Check to see that the extension cord is not damaged. If wires are exposed, do not use them.
 - Cubicles (that would normally be used in the office) are designed by engineers to handle the electrical load anticipated. When you are working from home, you only have an electrical receptacle have twelve feet, so typically there’s only one receptacle that is supplying power for your computer, monitor(s), printer, phone charge, etc.. Be sure to be electrically safe.
- We can’t overlook the current conditions of the massive wildfires in Colorado. Please see the update from Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment when it comes to **COVID-19 and Colorado Wildfires**: <https://covid19.colorado.gov/covid-19-and-wildfires>
- There is currently a **ban on all open fires in Colorado** that took effect Thursday, August 20th, and will last for thirty days. From Governor Polis (August 18):



IECRM SAFETY FORUM

Fire Safety and Prevention at Home and in the Workplace

“Our heroes on the front lines can only do so much. The Governor is asking all Coloradans to be extra diligent about fire safety right now, given the simultaneous burden and threat of COVID-19. Colorado is hot and dry, and something as small as a cigarette butt or a spark from a vehicle can start a fire - not to mention sources like campfires or fireworks. For those of you living in the wildland-urban interface, take the time to mitigate the threat of fire danger on your property.

Given what’s at stake, the Governor will be issuing a 30-day statewide ban on open fires, which goes into effect Thursday morning. Three of the four fires we are currently fighting are believed to be caused by human activity. We need to do everything we can to prevent new fires from starting. The ban will be in effect for all counties and prohibit all campfires, fireworks, and other open sources of ignition. Home barbecues, public grills, camp stoves, and approved covered fire pits will be permissible. Every county in Western Colorado already has this in place, with the exception of Ouray, Delta, and Chaffee, but this statewide measure provides clarity of message and will reduce all of our risks.

We also can’t forget to continue the ongoing safety measures that help us battle our other crisis, COVID-19:

- Keep your distance;
- Wear a mask;
- Wash your hands frequently;
- Avoid large gatherings and crowded areas;
- Protect at-risk populations like older Coloradans and those with pre-existing health conditions;
- And get tested 7 days after you may have been exposed to COVID-19 -- or immediately if you have symptoms.

Together, we can take precautions to avoid making an already challenging situation even worse. “

Additional Fire Safety and Prevention at Home

- The common habit when a circuit breaker trips is to just turn it back on. There is a reason that the breaker tripped. It usually means short circuit or circuit overload because you have too much amperage connected and sooner or later it could start a fire.
- With so many working from home, too many times people are jerry-rigging the outlets to accommodate their equipment. Be sure you are paying attention to the electrical in your home.



IECRM SAFETY FORUM

Fire Safety and Prevention at Home and in the Workplace

Top Causes of Residential Fires (<https://www.usfa.fema.gov/data/statistics/#causesR>)

1. **Cooking** 50.7%-Don't cook under the influence. Complacency can become an issue.
2. **Heating** 9.4% - Make sure you are changing filters regularly to ensure good airflow.
3. **Unintentional, carelessness** 7.5%
4. **Electrical malfunction** 6.8%- Remember that AFI's are circuit interrupters. They help prevent overload, despite the "inconvenience."
5. **Open flame** 4.3%
6. **Intentional** 4.2%
7. **Other heat** 3.4%
8. **Appliances** 3.0%
9. **Equipment malfunction** 2.4%
10. **Smoking** 2.0%
11. **Exposure** 1.8%
12. **Natural** 1.6%
13. **Cause under investigation** 1.3%
14. **Other equipment** 1.3%
15. **Playing with heat source** 0.4%

Be Prepared for Fires Ahead of Time:

- Check fire alarms
- Check fire extinguishers
- Have an exit plan with a meeting place
- Always dial 911
- Consider doing a fire drill (both at home and in the workplace)
- Consider incorporating going over the emergency plan as part of the onboarding process with new employees.
- Consider this when sending electricians to a new job site. Do they know where the exits are?
- Be aware of the tools you are using. What are the fire risks?