Fire Prevention
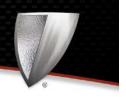
Just like buildings, fires come in all types and sizes. The ripple effect on the community, customers, and the business itself can be stressful. To reduce the likelihood of a devastating fire, business owners and risk managers should take the initiative to keep their property and employees safe.

Property insurers evaluate and assume risks with an understanding that while some fires are unavoidable, most building fires are preventable. A property underwriter generally reviews a fire risk according to the Construction, Occupancy, Protection and Exposure (COPE). This set of criteria evaluates a property based on a number of factors that indicate risk of loss. Building materials, the type of fire protection available, and other buildings that are close enough to fuel the fire are among the circumstances taken into account.

Applying the COPE characteristics as you look at your facilities can be useful for developing fire-prevention plans. You likely are not able to alter your building's construction, but you can ensure maintenance of heating and electrical systems, and practice proper storage and handling of flammable materials. Good housekeeping can eliminate conditions that have the potential to turn into catastrophes. When a fire starts, a quick, effective response can make the difference between minor smoke damage and a loss of business — or life.

Fire prevention is not just a one-time task, but should be a routine and ongoing process. People can become complacent or forgetful about fire risk. Involve employees, supervisors, and managers in recognizing potential fire hazards so the problems are addressed.

Most fires are avoidable if you pay attention to a few specific hazards. To identify these hazards, regularly complete fire-prevention checklists. When you discover unsafe conditions, you can monitor and help control them with a preventive maintenance plan. Proper set-up, scheduled care, and adherence to manufacturer's usage specifications are vital to keeping equipment in safe working order and preventing fires.

Some commonplace situations can become surprising sources of fire. Federated provides an industry- and business-specific customizable fire risk evaluation checklist. Find the checklist at https://www.federatedinsurance.com/link/PROD_655182. It is up to the business owner to finish development and implementation of the checklist, and train employees.

Now is the time to reinforce fire prevention at your business as part of a solid risk management program. For more resources on fire prevention, contact your local Federated marketing representative. Federated clients can also contact the Federated Risk Management Resource Center at (800) 838-1760.