FIRE PREVENTION WEEK:

Back on October 8 and 9, 1871, fire ripped though Chicago, destroying 17,400 structures and leaving 100,000 people homeless and 250 dead. You may remember hearing that the fire started when Mrs. O'Leary's cow kicked over a lantern.

Although historians claim this story is untrue, it's undeniably true that fire is a destroyer and a killer.

To commemorate the Great Chicago Fire and to raise awareness about the dangers of fire and the importance of prevention, Fire Prevention Week has been observed since 1922 during the week in which the fire occurred.

It's a time for all of us to focus on fire safety.

FIREPROOF YOUR FAMILY

The theme of this year's Fire Prevention Week is "Protect Your Family from Fire." So take these precautions from www.FireSafety.gov:

- Get a smoke alarm.
- Make an escape plan.
- Practice fire safety
  --In the bedroom
  --In the kitchen
  --For older people
  --On campus
  --In rural areas

Help! Fire!

Do you know what to do in a fire?

If you've ever seen a building burn, you know how quickly fire can spread and how destructive it can be. But would you know what to do if a fire struck your workplace or your home? Too many people don't, and every year fires claim lives and destroy property in communities across the land.

Since October 9 to 15 is Fire Prevention Week, this is a good time to think about fire safety at work and at home.

Be Prepared At Work

Here are four questions about workplace fires you should be able to answer:

1. Do you know your escape route? Which emergency exits are nearest your work area? Could you get there even if the lights were out and the place was full of smoke? Do you have at least two routes in case one is blocked by fire?

2. Do you know how to sound the alarm? Where are the alarm boxes located? Do you know how to activate them? Do you know who to call in the event of a fire?

3. Do you know where fire extinguishers are located? Do you know how to use one effectively to fight a fire?

4. Do you know where to meet outside for roll call? If you're not where you're supposed to be, firefighters might think you're still inside and risk their lives trying to find you.

Fire Safety At Home

You should also be able to answer yes to these four questions about home safety:

- Have you installed smoke detectors and checked them recently?
- Do you have fire extinguishers in key spots around the house, and do family members know how to use them?
- Are emergency numbers posted by the phone?
- Do you have a family evacuation plan, and do you practice it with regular drills?

Knowing what to do in the event of a fire at work or at home will help you, your co-workers, and your family respond calmly and effectively to save lives and minimize property damage.
ASK ABOUT QUALITY

The Japanese have a quality-improvement technique that is part of the reason why they are world renowned for quality and innovation. The technique is simple but remarkably effective. Whenever you’re faced with a problem on the job, ask “why.”

Once you’ve answered that question, ask another, related question and answer it—and so on until you’ve asked and answered at least five questions to get to the root of the problem.

For example, say that a number of delicate components you use to assemble a product are broken.

Question #1: Why are the components broken?  
Answer: Because the carton they came in was damaged.

Question #2: Why was the carton damaged?  
Answer: Because a worker stacked or transported it improperly.

Question #3: Why did a worker stack or transport the carton improperly?  
Answer: Because the worker did not know the proper method for handling these delicate components.

Question #4: Why did the worker lack the necessary information?  
Answer: Because the worker was inadequately trained or failed to pay attention to training.

Question #5: What can be done to remedy the situation?  
Answer: See that the worker gets additional training to improve the quality of his/her performance.

Live and Learn
You never know too much about your job

The most successful people are committed to personal and professional growth. They are committed to continuous learning. You can profit from the same approach by:

- **Realizing that you never stop growing and learning.** Your whole life is a learning experience.
- **Learning from your mistakes.** Everybody makes mistakes, but successful people never make the same mistake twice.
- **Recognizing that every experience—good or bad—provides a learning experience.** Often we learn more from bad experiences.
- **Understanding that to be successful, you always have to be open to new ideas and approaches.** Successful people never think they know it all.
- **Welcoming opportunities for personal and professional growth.** Take advantage of all training opportunities that come your way. Learn new skills whenever possible and welcome opportunities to broaden your job experience. Continue your education, read on a wide variety of subjects, keep up with changing technology, and stay in touch with what is happening in the world. The more you know about the world you live in, the more effective you will be in dealing with your job and in solving problems.

Always keep your mind open to new ideas and approaches. Realize that the more you know, the more satisfied you will be in work and life.

Protect Your Family
Have a home fire escape plan

The National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) recommends:

- **Have a smoke alarm on each level of your home.** Test alarms once a month and replace batteries once a year.
- **Draw a floor plan** that shows all doors and windows.
- **Equip doors and windows with security bars with quick release devices.** Teach family members how to work them.
- **Have two escape routes from each room, in case one route is blocked—the door and a window.**
- **Close doors behind you** to slow the spread of fire as you evacuate.
- **Crawl on your hands and knees** if you have to escape through smoke.
- **Use the stairs** if you live in a high-rise building.
- **Cover cracks and vents if you’re trapped inside by fire or smoke.** Use wet towels, clothing, etc. to keep smoke out, and signal from the window to firefighters with a light-colored cloth.
- **Designate a meeting place at a safe distance from your home** where family members should gather after escaping the fire. Mark it on your floor plan.
- **Call the fire department after you escape.**
- **Make sure the street number of your home is clearly visible so that firefighters can find you.**
- **Hold escape drills with the whole family** at least twice a year.
- **Never go back inside** a burning building!