

Cooperative Safety

Safety First

Hazardous Materials



Safety is as simple as ABC

Always Be Careful and follow the instructions

Cooperative Safety

Safety is an important aspect of day-to-day living, and everyone should take precautions. This is especially true in Cooperative Living. Whether you're a member, on the Board, or staff/Maintenance, everyone is responsible. All should follow safe living/working practices, safety rules and regulations, recognize hazards, and be aware of their surroundings. There are many different areas of Safety that Cooperative Members and personnel should be familiar with. The following course will help identify these areas and present some ideas and tips to keep you and your Co-operative safe.

Home Safety

According to the Home Safety Council, an average of 20,000 deaths and over 21 million medical visits occur annually. Many of these are preventable. The two most common areas for accidents are the kitchen and bathroom. Recognizing potential threats and making common-sense decisions will help in the protection of your family and home.

Kitchen –

Keep flammable items such as paper towels, plastic plates, and utensils away from the stove. These can easily start a fire if left too close to the range. Grease fires are also common. A fire extinguisher should always be stored with easy access in the kitchen area. If your Cooperative does not provide one, perhaps this is an item the Board may consider budgeting for. A small 15lb ABC fire extinguisher is fairly inexpensive and can

be purchased at any home improvement store which a member can purchase on their own if need be.

When cooking avoids wearing loose clothing or long sleeves which could come in contact with a hot burner and catch on fire. Or become caught on the handle of a pot spilling the contents.

Grease fires cannot be fought with water. Oil is hydrophobic and is the fuel source in grease fires. Water will only splash the oil around and spread the fire. Cover with a lid and smother the fire or have a fire extinguisher nearby.

If boiling water, place the pot on the back burner. Many children and adults have suffered second-degree burns due to hot water being spilled on them.

Bathroom –

Many electrical items are used in the bathroom such as blow dryers, flat irons, or razors which can lead to accidents and injuries. Do not plug an electrical appliance near an area where water is present such as the bathtub, toilet, or sink. If a plugged-in appliance falls into the water, it will cause electrocution. Electrical outlets could be protected with a ground fault circuit interrupter. (GFI). Maintenance could either install this for members or contact an electrician to do it. This does help members from being shocked in the event that water and electricity come together.

Slips, trips, and falls are very common in the bathroom. In the tub, use slip-resistant mats. Installing grab bars in or around the tub will make it easier to get in or out of the bath or in case you

lose your footing. Cooperatives will usually install grab bars in the bathroom as part of a reasonable modification for their members. Senior citizens especially can benefit from having grab bars.

Make sure that any water that has accumulated on the floor is mopped up. Not only will this help prevent slips and falls, but also refers back to electrocution.

The water temperature for hot water should be set at 120 degrees or below to help prevent scalding if the member has access to and control of their own water temperature setting. If the member does not have access, see if your Cooperative will install anti-scald faucets.

Fire Safety-

Fires in Cooperatives could be truly devastating not only for the member's unit where the fire originally started but also for the adjacent units. Cooperatives housing comes in many different forms, townhomes, duplexes, high rises, and such with connecting walls or with units above or below. So not only could the fire damage spread but also smoke and water. Some of the top causes of fire include cooking/ kitchen fires, (referring back to home safety) heating equipment (i.e. space heaters), smoking materials, and or children playing with matches or lighters. Here are some steps to help prevent home fires.

- Be careful with smoking materials and never smoke in bed. This is the major cause of fatal fires.

- Make sure cigarette butts are completely out by throwing them in the trash.
- Keep matches and lighters where children cannot get to them.
- Never leave candles or any other open flames unattended.
- Never leave cooking food unattended.
- Never leave hot irons, curling irons, etc. unattended.
- If your Cooperative allows the use of heating equipment, it must be at least 3 feet away from any combustible materials. Such as curtains, bedding, furniture, and such. Refer to the Rules and Regulations to see if space heating is permitted and the guidelines that your Cooperative wants you to follow.
- Worn or damaged electrical cords need to be replaced. Cords should never be run under rugs or carpets. The excessive foot traffic will eventually wear the protective coating and could start a fire. Use power strips if you need additional outlets.
- Most Cooperatives prohibit the storage of flammable liquids or compressed gases. Check the Rules and Regulations for your Co-op. Local Fire Codes for your city or town may also apply.

HEY, do you know EDITH?????????

E.D.I.T.H stands for Exit Drills in the Home. This is a good way to help family/ residents plan and escape in case of fire. This is a good exercise to plan and practice in case of a fire emergency. Plan an escape from every room in your home or building. Practice the plan and make sure everyone knows exactly what to do in case of a fire. Select a location where everyone is to meet. Make sure that you have a plan and that it works. Practice at least once a year, but in this case, more is always better.

Follow these steps to safety.

- Smoke rises, so when escaping a fire situation always stay low to the ground. This does not allow for better visibility, but also less smoke inhalation.
- Check doors before opening. If the door is cool, open it slowly and stay low to the ground and leave as quickly as possible. If the door is warm, seal the door with wet bedding and towels. Also, seal any air vents the same way. If there is a window in the room go to it and check for a smoke outside. If there is none, open the window and signal for help. Call 911 if able and give them your location and that you cannot get out.
- If your Cooperative is equipped with elevators, DO NOT use them during a fire. Use the stairs.

- Once you are safely out. DO NOT go back in. Notify the emergency responders and let the professionals do their job.

Smoke Alarms-

Most co-operatives provide Smoke Alarms and it is usually required by City ordinances. Depending on your local fire codes, it is usually recommended that a working smoke detector is on each level of a home. Check the detector twice a year to ensure that it is in good working condition. Never remove the batteries from a smoke detector or take them down and avoid damaging them.

Generally, it is a common practice for Cooperatives to do an Annual Inspection once a year and checking the smoke detectors is a part of it. If, however, a member has a concern about the detector in their home, contact the On-Site office and a work order will be issued for Maintenance.

Personal Safety Tips-

No matter how safe your Cooperative is, everyone should still take extra precautions for personal safety.

- Be aware of your surroundings. If you see unusual activity, or people acting in a suspicious way, use discretion and caution. If greatly concerned, members may always contact the Cooperative Security or On-Site Office.

- Keep doors locked, day or night whether you are home or not. If you are gone, give a “Someone is at home” look by putting lights on a timer.
- Maintain good lighting around your front entrance. If your Cooperative is a high rise with hallways or common areas, notify Maintenance for any lighting issues. If your co-operative is a property with green areas and parking lots, note any security lights that are out and notify the proper personnel. Good Lighting is one of the most inexpensive forms of Security there is.
- Know who is at your door before opening it. Always confirm the identification of maintenance or outside service people or contractors.

Elevator Safety

- If using your Cooperative’s elevator, check the inside before entering. Wait for the next elevator if you are unsure of the people inside.
- Try to stand by the control board. If you feel uncomfortable, get off on the next floor or as soon as possible.
- Most elevators are equipped with emergency phones.

Vehicle/ Parking Safety

- Always have your keys in your hand when approaching your car. Whether it be in a parking garage or lot. Always Park in well-lighted areas.
- Lock your car when driving or parking. Check your backseat and floor before entering your car.
- Do not leave any valuables in your car. If you must, keep them out of sight such as under the seat, in the glove compartment, or trunk. If a would-be thief is looking in your car for something to take, they should only see your car seats and floor mats.

Natural Disasters and Other Emergencies

Both FEMA and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security encourage and recommend that people take some simple steps to prepare for and respond to potential emergencies. The three key things are;

- Get an emergency supply kit
- Make a family emergency plan
- Be informed about different types of emergencies that could occur

The rule of thumb is to have some basic supplies on hand to last for three days at the least. Be sure to review the list and consider where you live and the unique needs of your family.

You may also want to consider having two supply kits, one for the home and another for your vehicle.

Recommended Item for a Basic Emergency Kit per FEMA

- Water, one gallon per person per day for at least three days. For drinking and sanitation
- Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery powered or hand crank radio, an NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask, to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter in place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags, and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities

- Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)
- Local Maps

In the situation of a natural disaster, it is very possible that Cooperative staff may not be able to respond right away. Therefore, Members should consider taking steps in order for them, their families, and neighbors to prepare and respond to potential emergencies.

Cooperative Workplace Safety

Although the Cooperative office and Maintenance Shop are relatively safe compared to most occupations, practical steps need to be taken to ensure a safe and healthful environment. Not only for Staff and Maintenance but also for the Members and Visitors who are on site.

Office/ Maintenance Shop Safety

- Keep cords out of aisles and office traffic areas to prevent trip hazards
- Equipment such as phones, files, and computer screens away from the edges of the desk
- Replace damaged flooring or use slip-proof mats or rugs
- Place heavy objects on the lower shelf

- Open only one file drawer at a time
- Identify and clean up spills
- Keep ventilation systems working correctly to provide a comfortable environment this also helps to minimize headaches and fatigue among office staff.

Accident prevention is a primary goal for everyone involved. All Staff should follow safe working practices, obey safety rules and regulations, Standard Operating procedures (SOPs) and work in a manner to maintain standards that are established by the Federal, State, and Local governments.

Basic safety rules and procedures should be followed by everyone. Recognize and avoid obvious hazards.

- A professional work ethic must be maintained at all times in the work area
- No Horse Play
- Staff should not operate any machine or equipment until trained in the operating procedures, hazards and safeguards
- Staff should not operate any machinery or equipment until assigned by their supervisor
- Any recognized hazards are to be reported immediately

- Take extra care to avoid tripping when carrying tools, chemicals, or even files. Walk Don't Run
- Staff should follow lifting techniques using their legs and not their back
- Keep sidewalks, hallways, and stairs free from obstruction
- Keep work areas clean and clear of other tools, equipment, etc., to ensure a safe working area.

All accidents should be reported immediately in accordance with the Cooperative's sops.

Equipment Safety

Certain equipment and tools are vital for the day-to-day business of maintaining and running a Cooperative. For Staff to do their job correctly and efficiently all the equipment used must be in good working order and stored correctly when not in use.

- Tools and equipment should be stored and used in a manner to prevent damage that would make them unsafe for use
- All tools and equipment should be inspected daily by staff before being used on a job. This includes checking cords and wires for cuts or damage. Do not use damaged cords. If any equipment is found to be in need of service or defective, it should be tagged and removed from service

- If staff is conducting maintenance on equipment, only those who understand how to shut down the equipment will perform the service. I.E., electrical equipment disconnected and spark plugs removed from other equipment as necessary
- All hand and power tools should be cleaned and stored in a way to prevent damage to them.
- Tools should be sagely carried by and or in a toolbox
- Electrically powered tools should have an approved ground unless it is doubly insulated and carries a permanent label or mark so stating.
- Tools and equipment should be inspected and maintained on a regular annual or bi-annual to ensure safe operation.

There are times when Maintenance is on property performing certain duties when they need to take additional steps for safety by wearing Personal Protective Equipment. (PPE)

These are devices used to protect the individual from such things as hearing loss, eye, and limb injury, or damage to the lungs. PPE should be provided by the Cooperative for its Maintenance Staff and must be worn when required in accordance with Standard Operating Procedures. (SOPs).

It is very important that no changes should be made to the PPE as it will make it defective and provide the protection it was designed to do.

Below is a list of the most common PPE used:

- Ear protection
- Face shields
- Safety hats
- Protective suits and booties
- Safety glasses/goggles
- Respirators as needed
- Gloves

Staff will use the required PPE as prescribed in the course of their duties. It should also be noted any guard or other safety devices that are on operating equipment will not be removed except for authorized scheduled maintenance/service purposes.

This course was designed to help those who either live or work in the Cooperative setting become more knowledgeable and aware of the different areas of safety and make use of the information. So whether you are on the Board Staff or a member, safety should be a part of the daily routine.

Safety is everyone's responsibility.

Test Questions and Answer Key

1. **Who is responsible for safety?**

- a. Staff
- b. Everyone
- c. Maintenance
- d. Security

The correct answer is b.

everyone

2. **According to the Home Safety Council, the two most common area for accidents in the home is**

- a. Kitchen and Bathroom
- b. Bathroom and Basement
- c. Bathroom and Stairs
- d. Kitchen and Stairs

The correct answer is a.

Kitchen and Bathroom

3. **Grease fires cannot be fought with water because**

- a. Oil is hydrophobic
- b. Oil is the fuel source in grease fires
- c. Water will splash the oil and spread the fire
- d. All the above

The correct answer is d.

All the above

4. **Cooperatives will usually install grab bars for their members as part of a**

- a. Home Improvement
- b. Reasonable Accommodation
- c. Reasonable Modification
- d. Accident Prevention

The correct answer is c.

Reasonable Modification

5. **EDITH stands for Exit Drills in The Home.**

- a. True
- b. False

The correct answer is a.

True

6. What can you do for extra precautions for personal safety?

- a. Be aware of your surroundings
- b. Keep doors locked day or night
- c. Maintain good light around your front entrance or residential hallway
- d. All of the above

The correct answer is d.

All of the above

7. One of the most expensive forms of Security is good lighting

- a. True
- b. False

The correct answer is b.

False

8. Vehicle safety involves one of the following?

- a. Have your keys in your hand when approaching your car.
- b. Check your backseat and floor before entering your car
- c. Park in a well-lighted area
- d. All of the above

The correct answer is d.

All of the above

9. In case of an emergency, FEMA recommends to have basic supplies on hand to last how many days?

- a. 2 days
- b. 3 day
- c. 4 days
- d. 5 days

Correct answer is b.

3 days

10. At times Maintenance need to take additional steps for safety while performing certain duties by

- a. Wearing PPE. Personal Protective Equipment
- b. Following SOP's. Standard Operating Procedures
- c. Following Rules and Regulations
- d. Following Policy and Procedure

The correct answer is a.

Wearing PPE, Personal Protective Equipment

