Seven Statistics on Workplace Flooding



Floods are one of the most common hazards in North America. Here are seven statistics relating to flooding and its effects on the workplace.

1. Nine workplace hazards associated with storm and flood activities include: electrical hazards; carbon monoxide exposure; musculoskeletal injuries; heat stress; motor vehicle hazards; hazardous materials; fire; confined spaces and falls. (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH))
2. An evacuation plan in the event of a flood should include these seven elements: conditions that will activate the plan; chain of command; emergency functions and employees who will perform them; specific evacuation procedures, including routes and exits; procedures for accounting for personnel, customers and visitors; equipment for personnel; and a review of the plan with your workers. (Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA))
3. In 2013, flash and river floods claimed 82 lives across the United States, of which 37 involved people killed while in vehicles. (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA))
4. Six inches (15 centimeters) of standing water is enough to stall some cars; 12 inches (30 centimeters) is enough to cause some vehicles to float; and 24 inches (61 centimeters) is enough to sweep a vehicle away. (US Department of Labor)
5. Before allowing workers to clean up after a flood, a risk assessment must be conducted. It should cover these two things: any hazards that are present, and personnel protective equipment (PPE) needed by workers.
6. Five flood prevention measures that should be undertaken during naturally occurring floods are: placing sandbags or setting up generators and submersible pumps; de-energizing and locking out equipment in affected areas if these measures can be undertaken safely; regularly checking outside drainage systems for affected buildings; providing access to mechanical rooms for remediation and installation contractors; and restricting access to buildings. (University of Chicago)
7. You should create a plan to mitigate your company’s losses and reduce your downtime in the event of a flood. Six things to consider are: the need to identify critical products and services; the maximum amount of time you can stop delivering critical products and services; the need to develop system and mitigation strategies to protect critical assets; the need to identify critical inputs such as suppliers, people, processes and infrastructure; the need to develop strategies to continue operation of your business; and possible alternate locations where you can operate your business.

Floods are one of the most common hazards in North America. They can be triggered by sudden heavy rainfall, rising rivers, sudden snow melts, tidal surges, ice jams and

dam failures. Here are seven statistics relating to flooding and its effects on the workplace.