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PEOPLE

A closer look at fire safety standards in commercial buildings

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The construction industry shoulders a herculean responsibility, when it comes to ensuring the safety of establishments. In India, construction by leading players is done keeping NBC (National Building Code) in mind. NBC provides a set of instructions that comprises building requirements, development

control rules, administrative regulations that includes fire safety systems, structural design, construction and stipulations regarding materials, building and plumbing services. There is a growing need for companies to put in rigorous efforts in training, understanding, implementing and raising awareness around the importance of fire safety, as part of facility management. At Sattva, our focus has been and will remain on standardizing processes and systems, combined with years of cutting-edge expertise and experience, to provide a safe ecosystem for our customers and this commitment has earned us the reputation of being a trusted player in the industry.

Fire safety is a fundamental consideration in building design and management and the very basic necessity for every developer is to have fire suppression systems and fire alarms in place. Regular fire drills familiarize employees, tenants and the workforce with evacuation methods and protocols. Therefore, developers today are focused on aligning utmost fire safety measures to avoid any mishaps. It provides the potential to completely eliminate the risks with fire outbreaks. Fire safety in commercial buildings is an ongoing process and requires a series of active steps to keep your property free of any potential harm.

Importance of training people in facility management and a need to raise awareness on fire safety standards in commercial buildings

The most effective approach varies depending on the organization and its employees. Facility management includes all aspects of managing an organization's physical environment, including the buildings, grounds and infrastructure. Without proper training and the right awareness, people may not be aware of all the safety standards that need to be followed in a commercial building.

Developers and architects need to plan on aligning the defined fire safety procedures, during the design/construction phase. They should ensure that the constructed project is compliant, in terms of fire and smoke detection and fire alarm systems.

Maintenance of fire equipment is as essential as training people. All fire equipment requires schedule maintenance and inspection. As a part of regular maintenance, the technicians should test all equipment and systems, ensure all components are repaired and replaced and record the work performance of all equipment.

Formation of ERT (Emergency Response Team) is mandatory. The team members should be trained on appropriate emergency response activities. These activities comprises of evacuating danger zone, closing main shutoffs, calling for an external aid and initiating rescue operations.

Fire Safety awareness, therefore, plays a crucial role in encompassing a long-term strategy for preventing any emergency situations. Fire Safety awareness comprises of three essential elements —

- Fire prevention
- Fire protection
- Fire suppression

Learning how to respond to a fire is a large part of fire safety awareness and training and is essential in understanding of protocol in case of an emergency for people to be aptly prepared.

Best of technology used in the industry for ensuring fire safety

Real Estate has been at the forefront of adapting and developing solutions for better, safer and more efficient ways to have safety protocols in place. Mass notification systems and “internet of things” are navigating the evolution of fire safety measures in the industry. Technology, today, plays a crucial role in safety and it continues to evolve and improve each day. The industry is becoming smarter with smart products today, some of the smart products that ensure your fire safety is —

- Smart Plugs/Outlets
- Smart Stovetop with fire prevention
- Smart Fire Detectors
- Smart Smoke Detectors
- Smart Batteries
- Fire Resistant wiring

Top three learnings for budding commercial players for ensuring best-in-class fire safety standards

To have best-in-class fire safety standards, there are 3 basics

1. Strict adhering to the NBC (National Building Code)
2. Focus on fire safety awareness and training
3. Staying abreast with the latest technologies in the industry

To conclude, the single best way to eliminate fires is to eliminate the risk of fires. Raising the bar of awareness on fire safety will eliminate the risks and damages caused by fire mishaps.

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