



# TEAMSTERS Safety & Health **FACTS**

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## EMPLOYEE ALARM SYSTEMS

29 CFR 1910.165

This OSHA standard regulates alarm systems that are required by other OSHA standards, such as 1910.38, which concerns emergency action plans and fire prevention plans.

The alarm should be used to notify employees of the need to evacuate in the event of a fire or emergency, and should be audible over normal background noise levels. If the system is used for other communication, the alarm should be distinctive and recognizable as a signal to evacuate or to perform necessary assigned duties under the emergency action plan.

The employer must:

- ♦ Explain to employees the preferred method of reporting emergencies, i.e., manual pullbox, public address system, emergency radio, or telephone. If a telephone is chosen as the method for reporting an emergency situation, emergency telephone numbers should be posted near the telephone or in another conspicuous location for quick reference. If a communication system also serves as an alarm system, emergency messages shall have priority over all other types of communication.
- ♦ Develop procedures for employees to follow when sounding alarms in the workplace. However, if there are fewer than ten employees, voice communication would be adequate for sounding the alarm.
- ♦ Make certain that installation and all components of the alarm system are approved. The alarm should be tested every two months using a different actuating device, i.e., pullbox. The servicing, maintenance, and testing of the alarm system should be performed by trained personnel only.
- ♦ Return the system to operable condition as quickly as possible after a test or an alarm. Spare parts that are subject to wear and tear or are destroyed must be kept on hand to allow for the

quick repair of the system.

- ♦ Make certain that the alarm system is operable at all times unless it is undergoing repairs or maintenance.
- ♦ Maintain or replace power supplies to guarantee the system is fully operational. If the system is out of service, then back-up alarm systems (telephone, etc.) must be used.
- ♦ Make certain the manually-operated actuating devices, i.e., pullboxes, are not blocked and are easily seen and accessible.