

OFFICIAL GAZETTE
ISSUE NO.(3104)
Thursday 16th May 2013

MINISTRY OF LABOUR

MINISTERIAL ORDER NO.(6) OF 2013 WITH RESPECT TO PROTECTION OF WORKERS FROM THE HAZARDS OF FIRE IN ESTABLISHMENTS AND WORK SITES

The Minister of Labour,

Having reviewed the Law on Constructional Organisation of Buildings promulgated by Legislative Decree No.(13) of 1977, as amended,

And Legislative Decree No.(5) of 1990 with respect to Civil Defence,

And Legislative Decree No.(21) of 1996 Governing the Environment, as amended,

And Law No.(25) of 2009 with respect to approving the Accession of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the International Labour Organisation Convention No.(155) of 1981 with respect Occupational Safety and Health, and Work Environment,

And the Labour Law for the Private Sector promulgated by Legislative Decree No.(36) of 2012, particularly Article (166) thereof,

And Decree No.(2) of 1994 with respect to approving the Accession of the State of Bahrain to the Arab Convention No.(7) of 1977 and the Arab Recommendation No.(1) of 1977 with respect to Occupational Safety and Health,

And Decree No.(7) of 1977 with respect to approving the Accession to the Arab Convention No.(13) of 1981 with respect to Work Environment,

And Order of the Minister of Labour No.(12) of 2005 with respect to the Protection of Workers during Work from the Hazards of Fire in Establishments,

And having sought the opinion of the concerned authorities,

And upon the submission of the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour,

Hereby Orders the Following:

Article 1

In the application of the provisions of this Order, the following terms and expressions shall have the meanings assigned against each unless the context otherwise requires:

1. **Ministry:** The ministry concerned with labour affairs in the private sector.
2. **Maintained:** means kept in a good working condition and intended for use whenever required.
3. **Qualified Person:** means any person who is suitably trained and has sufficient experience in his work.
4. **Competent Authority:** means the authority concerned with civil defence affairs.
5. **Work Site:** means the place prepared by an employer for the worker to perform his duties therein. Work sites shall also include the following:
 - Any place in the establishment where workers can be present.
 - Any room, corridor, hall, chamber, staircase, road or any other place inside the establishment used by the workers to enter or exit the work site.
6. **Fire-fighting methods including:**
 - **Manual Fire-fighting Equipment:** They include manual equipment used for fire-fighting in its early stages by ordinary persons present at the building.
 - **Fixed Fire-fighting Equipment and Facilities:** A fixed network of extensions that includes what is used for fire-fighting in its early stages by ordinary persons who are present at the work site including what is used by trainees who receive training upon its use.
 - **Fixed Automatic Fire-fighting Equipment and Facilities:** A fixed network of extensions with outlets distributed in the areas required to be protected and fed by continuous sources of appropriate fire-fighting materials and is automatically operated.
7. **Fire Alarm Systems:**
 - a) **Manual Alarm System:** Manually operated equipment by switches (call points) distributed in certain areas and operated by electrical power.
 - b) **Automatic Alarm System:** Equipment operated by electrical power to detect the fire hazard.

Article 2

The provisions of this Order shall be applicable to all establishments and work sites subject to the provisions of the Labour Law for the Private Sector promulgated by Law No.(36) of 2012.

Article 3

All establishments, which are built after the effective date of this Order, as well as all extensions and alterations to existing establishments, shall be designed according to the following:

1. Security and safety requirements set forth in the Law of Constructional Organisation of Buildings promulgated by Legislative Decree No.(13) of 1977, as amended.
2. The approved Bahraini Standard Specification with respect to Industrial Safety and Health Conditions.
3. Regulation concerning the requirements for prevention and protection in establishments.
4. They shall comprise the facilities ensuring the prevention of building's collapse, eruption or spread of fire or smoke from one part of the building to other parts.

It shall be prohibited to commence any new construction works or to make any extensions or modifications to an existing establishment except upon reviewing the designs and approving them by a competent authority.

An employer shall notify the Ministry of whatever adopted in accordance with the provisions of this Article.

Article 4

An employer shall take the necessary precautions for protection of his workers or those who are present at his work site from the hazards of fire. He shall provide them with protection services against its hazards as well as the means of rescue and fire-fighting in the manner outlined in this Order.

It shall be prohibited for an employer to encumber workers or to deduct from their wages any amount in consideration of providing such protection.

Article 5

An employer shall conduct an evaluation of the hazards of fire at the work sites in the establishment and shall take all the necessary measures and precautions to reduce the hazards of fire to the minimum level.

Article 6

A worker shall be prohibited from doing any act or omission with the intent of preventing instructions, abusing or causing damage to the facilities maintained for the protection of the health and safety of workers in the establishment. A worker shall use the means of protection and shall look after the facilities kept in his custody with due care and shall implement the instructions laid down for protection of his health from the hazards of fire and shall not do any act that is likely to cause fire.

Article 7

Adequate and suitable fire-fighting facilities shall be provided and maintained at all work sites by the employer, provided that they shall comply with the following:

1. They shall be fit for use on a continuous basis.
2. Their numbers and type shall be suitable to the size and nature of the establishment's operations and in accordance with the approved standard specifications with respect to occupational safety and health conditions.
3. Fire-fighting facilities shall be kept at conspicuous places that are easily accessible.

Article 8

An employer shall entrust a qualified person to undertake the inspection of fire-fighting facilities at least once in every year, provided that the date of inspection, date of subsequent maintenance and name of the person who has carried out the inspection shall be marked thereon.

The abovementioned periodical inspection shall be conducted upon fire-fighting equipment and facilities by an organization recognized by the competent authority.

Article 9

An employer shall provide all the facilities with sufficient and suitable alarm systems in the case of fire that shall be heard simultaneously in all parts of the establishment. The fitness of such devices for operation shall be examined by a qualified person at least once every three months and the inspection results shall be entered in a special register to be maintained in the establishment.

The abovementioned periodical inspection shall be conducted upon fire alarms by an organization recognized by the competent authority.

Article 10

An employer shall train a sufficient number of workers on the use of fire-fighting facilities to ensure taking the appropriate action in case of fire, provided that the training shall be undertaken by an organization approved by the competent authority.

Article 11

All establishments and work sites shall have sufficient and suitable means of escape in case of fire subject to the following conditions:

1. Emergency exits shall be as follows:
 - a) Their number, capacity and dimensions shall be proportionate to the number of workers and nature of operations, provided that the workers with special needs shall be taken into account.
 - b) They shall lead to safe areas and as quickly as possible.

- c) They shall open outwards when individuals rush or when they exit.
- d) They shall not be locked and can be easily opened from the inside whenever required.
- e) The doors shall not be opened by a sliding or a revolving method.
- f) They shall be lit and easily identifiable by clearly displaying on them the words "Emergency Exit" and shall be placed at an appropriate height while providing emergency lighting for the exits in case of a power cut.

2. All the passages leading to the fire exits shall be fire resistant, shall be clear of obstructions and shall include emergency lighting so that the exit route can be adequately lit.
3. A signboard shall be displayed in a prominent place showing the instructions that must be followed in case of a fire in the establishment. The signboard shall be in Arabic and English or any other language understood by the worker whenever required.
4. There shall be safe assembly points for the workers in case of fire to be designated "Fire Assembly Point", and all the workers shall be made aware of their location.

Article 12

An employer shall observe the following conditions at the establishments and work sites for the prevention of fire:

1. The establishment's buildings should be made of materials that are fire resistant in accordance with the establishment's nature of business.
2. To separate the sites that contain inflammable and other materials from other sites with a safe distance that ensure that fire shall not spread once it ignited.
3. To insulate hot surfaces like boilers and pipes connected thereto to prevent the spread of the radiation heat.
4. To coat hot gas pipes and exhaust pipes of internal combustion engines with insulating materials to prevent the spread of heat.
5. To use secure containers and tanks to store and handle flammable liquids and gases in small quantities in special stores and in accordance with the quantities determined by the concerned authority.
6. To place all equipment and operations that produce high temperatures or fire at a safe distance from the inflammable materials.
7. To take precautionary measures to prevent any malfunction in electrical supplies and connectors so that they shall be in accordance with the technical standards together with constant inspection and maintenance while avoiding the hazards of overloading electrical appliances.

8. To observe the hygiene practices and proper storage arrangements together with the disposal of hazardous waste and materials especially inflammable materials in all work sites.
9. To divide the stores of materials, products or waste particularly the inflammable ones into sections by fire resisting partitions or non inflammable doors.
10. To prevent smoking inside the work places particularly the ones that contain inflammable materials together with instructions to be posted in such places.
11. To educate the workers about the hazards of fire, ways of preventing and combating together with the faults that lead to its occurrence and ways to prevent them.

Article 13

An employer shall observe the following conditions in any under construction site for the protection from fire:

1. To store inflammable materials away from any flame or source of oxidising materials.
2. To adopt safety precautions in operations that generate high temperatures, any other type of flames, sparks, dust, vibrations from welding, grinding, cutting and the issue of a hot work permit.
3. To adopt safety precautions upon using electric generators and mobile pumps so as to be placed away from the inflammable materials and workers.
4. To prevent smoking inside the work sites that contain inflammable materials provided instructions for this purpose shall be posted in such areas.
5. To take precautionary measures to prevent any malfunction in electrical supplies and connectors so that they shall be in accordance with the technical standards together with constant inspection and maintenance while avoiding the hazards of overloading electrical appliances.
6. To dispose of inflammable industrial waste and avoid the accumulation of such materials together with the periodical cleaning of such work sites.
7. To store compressed gas cylinders in special stores away from heat sources together with adopting safety precautions while transporting or using them.
8. To adopt safety precautions upon using mobile pumps so as to be placed away from the places where the workers are present.
9. The site controller's room (security guard) shall be designed as not to be part of the work site together with adopting all the workers accommodation conditions.

10. To maintain firefighting equipment and train workers to use them while observing their difference and number according to the nature of the existing work.

Article 14

An evacuation plan shall be prepared by the employer in case of emergency and workers shall be trained on the manner of reporting fire when it is discovered and also the manner of using the alarm systems in the establishment. An evacuation drill shall be conducted at least once in every year.

Other measures shall be taken ensuring that all the establishment's workers have become well aware of the means of escape, methods of using them and the steps to be followed in case of fire including training on the use of fire-fighting equipment.

Article 15

It shall be strictly prohibited for any employer to use any work site except upon obtaining a "fire safety certificate" from the competent authority.

The provisions of this Article shall not be applicable to buildings under construction or on engineering works.

Article 16

All existing establishments and work sites at the time of putting this Order into effect shall modify their conditions in compliance with its provisions within three months from the effective date thereof.

Article 17

Any person who violates the provisions of this Order shall be liable for the penalties provided for in Article (192) of the Labour Law for the Private Sector promulgated by Law No.(36) of 2012.

Article 18

Ministerial Order No.(12) of 2005 with respect to the Protection of Workers during Work from the Hazards of Fire in Establishments shall be revoked and any provision that contravenes the provisions of this Order shall be revoked.

Article 19

The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour shall implement this Order which shall come into effect from the day following the date of its publication in the Official Gazette.

**Signed: Jameel bin Mohamed Ali Humaidan,
Minister of Labour**

Issued on: 18th Jumada Al Akher, 1434 Hijra
Corresponding to: 28th April 2013 A.D.