

Obstructions – Keep a Clear Path to Safety

Imagine an emergency situation: You see smoke coming from a trash can. Is the nearest fire extinguisher blocked? Or maybe you need to reach an eyewash station quickly but can't because it's walled off by boxes.

Safety stations and equipment are not useful if they are not accessible. Simple guidelines can help you make sure your workplace is free of obstructions.

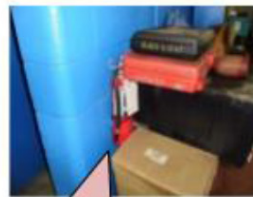
- Electrical panels: Keep electrical panels clear and accessible at all times. Sparks or hot elements from electrical panels can fall into boxes stored underneath and start a fire. No combustible material should be stored within 3 feet of electrical panels.
- Exits: Aisles and exit doors must be kept clear of all obstructions to evacuate buildings quickly in a fire and not block others from exiting.
- Eyewash stations: Seconds are critical when eyes need to be flushed. Never store material or leave equipment in front of an eyewash station.
- Fire extinguishers: They are often blocked by other material, since they are rarely used. When there is a fire, the time spent getting to the extinguisher is time not spent using it to fight the flames. Never cover or block any extinguisher for even a short period of time. Fire extinguishers are not clothing racks and must never be used as a place to hang anything.
- Sprinkler valves: Your fire department and maintenance staff must have access to control water to the sprinkler system at all times in an emergency.
- Below are some examples of good and bad access to emergency items.



Good Access



Blocked eyewash



Blocked extinguisher



Blocked panel