

GSD Hosts Montoya Building Safety Day

By Joseph Vigil, Public Information Officer, GSD

The General Service Department hosted a Montoya Building Safety Day for building employees and occupants on October 28, 2025. The one-day safety event featured a round robin of hands-on demonstrations and classes. The expert-led sessions provided guidance and practical tips to help keep employees safe every day.



“Building safety, security, and emergency aid are everyone’s responsibility,” said Anna Silva, the General Services Department Cabinet Secretary. “When it comes to protecting our workplace, we all depend on one another. Whether it’s recognizing a potential hazard, following safety procedures, or lending a hand in an emergency, each of us plays a vital role in keeping our work environment secure and our coworkers safe.”

Silva and the GSD safety leadership team developed the ‘Safety Day’ event as a pilot program that includes training on CPR/AED Awareness, Stair Evacuation using the evacuation chair, Active Threat, Fire Extinguishers, and the RAVE emergency communication system. The program also featured an electronic registration developed by GSD’s Technology and Systems Support Bureau which tracked the number of attendees to help manage the 320 total class seats that participants registered for.

Silva and her safety team will roll out the Safety Day program to other state of New Mexico buildings beginning next month.



“Working together with our agencies and buildings, we can prevent accidents, respond quickly when needed, and ensure everyone goes home safely at the end of the day,” said Silva. “Safety truly is a team effort—and every action counts.”

Attendees of the fire extinguisher class received hands-on experience using a fire extinguisher/ Bullseye fire simulator and learned the P.A.S.S. method (Pull- the nozzle, Aim – the nozzle, Squeeze-the handle, Sweep-side to side) to confidently respond to a small fire. They reviewed the five different classes of fire extinguishers and covered the hazards to consider when using specific extinguishers.



“The safety in decision making, when confronted with a fire is very important,” emphasized Adrew Montoya, Fire Support coordinator, State Fire Marshal’s office. “For your personal safety, knowing your evacuation routes and choosing the right extinguisher are extremely important for you to know.”

Instructors also covered the science of a fire, the Fire Tetrahedron (Fire Triangle) which is the chemical reaction of fire made up of heat, oxygen, and fuel. Removing one of those in a fire, Montoya said, will result in the extinguishment of the fire.

The residential fire training covered where home fires start - kitchen, bedroom, living room, chimney, and laundry room. Attendees also talked about maintaining and replacing extinguishers at home as well as residential fire alarms to include when batteries should be replaced and when the alarm should be replaced.

Safety Day participants also learned the basics of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and how to use an automated external defibrillator (AED) which can be lifesaving in a cardiac emergency. From checking the scene for safety, to performing CPR as trained, to being comfortable following the prompts of AED equipment, employees learned the value and importance of the basics. They also learned to use the evacuation chair, a specialized piece of equipment, to safely assist people with mobility challenges during an emergency evacuation.



"This training doesn't only apply here, it applies at home and in everyday life," said Raymond Ross, loss control consultant for POMS. "It brings awareness to people and how be helpful when people need help."

Participants also learned about the Active Threat recommended protocols and strategies, giving them a good understanding of the "Run, Hide, Fight" protocols to help you react during an active threat situation.

Communication is key during any emergency and participants learned how to use the RAVE Emergency Communications System and how to stay informed and safe during a building-wide event.



“The training went great and answered lots of questions that participants had,” said Will Lichty, fire safety specialist with the Facilities Management Division. “People were curious about how to use AEDs, evacuation chairs, and fire extinguishers. People are feeling better about their personal safety in this building.”

TJ Holdridge, security operations manager with GSD, said the training was very informative and helps everyone understand how important safety is.

“The training and knowledge of the tools available empowers employees to keep themselves and fellow coworkers safe and how to respond adequately,” said Holdridge. “This training, coupled with added technology like access control, surveillance, fire panels, smoke detectors work together to keep everyone safe.”