

# GN X-XX Fire Poles in Fire Stations

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## Background

This guidance applies to all fire departments operating stations equipped with fire poles for rapid deployment from upper floors to apparatus bays. It is recommended that new fire stations do not incorporate fire poles into the design.

## Concerns/hazards

- Falls from height during descent
- Slips due to wet or contaminated surfaces
- Impact injuries from improper landing
- Musculoskeletal strain from incorrect technique
- Unauthorized or recreational use

## Actions for employers

### Employers should:

- Develop and implement procedures for safely using fire poles
- Provide training in the unique aspects of fire pole use.

## Precautions

- Provide ample lighting at the fire pole.
- Provide guarding such as a hand rail with a latch able gate, or a cover to protect the pole hole.
- Provide anti slip flooring at the top of the pole opening.
- Provide a purpose made mat on the floor below.

- If the total height from the top of the floor at the pole to the floor below is more than 3 meters (Approx 10 feet) Fall protection must be provided.

## Considerations

### 1. Design and Installation:

- Fire poles must comply with applicable codes and standards.
- Install protective landing mats or cushioned flooring at the base.
- Ensure adequate lighting and clear landing zones free of obstructions.
- Provide guardrails or barriers at upper-level openings except during active use.
- If poles lead to living/work areas from apparatus bay area. Use of a sealed cover must be used to seal the living/work area from apparatus exhaust.

### 2. Training and Competency:

- Firefighters must receive initial and annual refresher training on safe pole use.
- Training should include proper grip, controlled descent, and landing techniques.
- Prohibit use by untrained personnel or visitors.

### 3. Operational Controls:

- Post signage indicating “Authorized Personnel Only.”
- Implement SOPs restricting use to emergency response or approved drills.
- Inspect poles and landing areas weekly for wear, damage, or hazards.

### 4. Maintenance and Inspection:

- Document inspections and corrective actions in station logs.
- Replace worn mats or damaged poles immediately.
- Include fire pole safety in annual station safety audits.

### 5. Incident Reporting:

- Report all injuries or near misses related to fire pole use through the department’s health and safety reporting system.
- Review incidents at Joint Health & Safety Committee meetings for corrective measures.

## Applicable regulations and acts

Read:

- [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)
  - clause 25(1)(b) for maintaining equipment in good condition
  - clause 25(2)(a) for providing information and instruction to a worker
  - clause 25(2)(d) for making workers aware of hazards
  - clause 25(2)(h) for taking every precaution reasonable to protect workers
  - Regulation for Industrial Establishments Reg. 851

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## Related

[Guideline Note 6-40: Working at Heights](#)