

Mandatory information

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Firefighters Guidance Note #: Pre-incident Planning

Improve the safety of firefighters through pre-incident planning.

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Background

Structural firefighting is very dangerous work. It is operationally beneficial to firefighter health and safety to have familiarity with the buildings in which firefighters operate.

Concerns/hazards

Firefighters respond to buildings of all shapes, sizes and uses. Building use may change, which may alter their configuration and fire protection systems. Building configurations may differ from how they appear on the exterior.

Firefighters operate in limited visibility. The risk increases in unfamiliar buildings - especially large commercial, industrial and institutional buildings. Building familiarity is especially important as it relates to building construction and susceptibility to early structural collapse.

Actions for employers

Employers should:

- develop a pre-incident planning program that compiles building information
- keep building information updated with information gained during fire prevention activities or from other allied agencies
- provide building information to responding firefighters as part of a computer-aided dispatch program or through hard copy reference materials, or other acceptable means
- familiarize firefighters with building configurations and functions
- coordinate building familiarization tours for firefighters
- train firefighters on how to conduct pre-incident planning and how to use the information to protect their health or safety

Considerations

The information that should be gathered as part of a pre-incident planning program should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Address, building name and access information
- Building size, type, occupancy and construction
- Primary and secondary entrances
- Location of key box
- Location of fire safety plan
- Location of utility controls
- Location of fire alarm system panel(s)
- Location and operation of fire protection systems (sprinklers, standpipes etc.)

- Location, type and function of elevators
- Storage of hazardous materials or pesticides
- Building contact/key holder information
- Water supply and hydrant locations
- Calculation of critical flow rates
- Any other applicable hazard or health or safety information
- Any information obtained from allied municipal agencies, such as the local building department

Applicable regulations, acts and standards

Read:

- [*Occupational Health and Safety Act*](#)
 - 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

Related

[NFPA 1021 . Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications](#)

[GN X-XX: Hoarding \(under development\)](#)

[Read all firefighters guidance notes <link to landing page>](#)

This resource does not replace the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) and its regulations, and should not be used as or considered legal advice. Health and safety inspectors apply the law based on the facts in the workplace.