



Lexington County Fire Service

Standard Operating Guidelines
Pre-Fire Survey OPS-012

EFFECTIVE: December 1, 2007 **ISSUED BY:** Russell R. Rawl, Fire Service Coordinator

RECINDS: No Previous Policy

SCOPE: All Lexington County Fire Service personnel

PURPOSE: Conducting pre-fire surveys of existing and newly-constructed facilities in Fire Service response areas improves the effectiveness and safety of fire suppression operations. In addition to being a requirement of the Insurance Services Office (ISO), pre-fire surveys form the basis for the initial size-up by the first arriving officer and set the tone of fire suppression operations until completion of the incident. Good pre-fire surveys also provide information that is an integral part of protecting firefighters working at incidents.

POLICY: A high-risk facility is any location that poses an unusual threat to the safety of the public or firefighters, that could experience a very high dollar loss or that presents special firefighter considerations. Examples of high risk facilities include: hospitals, nursing homes, shopping malls, industries, warehouses, tank farms, schools, railroad switching yards, dormitories and high-rise buildings.

I. Workload Coordination

Fire Service personnel shall conduct pre-fire surveys of all high risk facilities in their response area every six months. They shall also conduct surveys of all other properties except single family dwellings and duplexes as time permits. Each County fire station administrative response area will be divided three ways into areas designed A, B, and C. The workload will be divided among the shifts in each station. On July 1, areas shall be rotated among shifts so that each shift will visit each high risk location within three years. For example, Shift A will have Area A for one year and will then change to Area B for one year. Non shift stations will conduct pre-fire surveys on Monday through Thursdays.

Good coordination and communication among officers on each shift must occur to ensure that all high risk locations receive a visit at the proper intervals.

Fire Service personnel shall call the manager of the business that is to be surveyed to schedule an appointment that is mutually agreeable. The officer shall explain the purpose of the visit and answer any questions that the manager may have. Operational Chiefs shall be kept informed of survey appointments to avoid conflicts with training and other activities.

All personnel will wear the polo dress shift while performing pre-fire survey inspections.

II. Recording Information

All applicable information requested on the work sheet shall be recorded and then entered into the Firehouse software at the fire station for transfer to Headquarters.

Simple diagrams of the building layout and floor plan shall be drawn of each facility or shall be obtained from the occupant. The diagram shall show the location of fire department connections and sprinkler control valves. Drawings of buildings with multiple-occupancies, such as shopping malls, shall show each business and the location of utility cutoffs for the business. An emergency contact name and phone number shall be obtained for each business in a multiple-occupancy location.

III. Retrieving Information

Local pre-fire surveys shall be printed from Firehouse at the station where they are entered and carried in a binder in order of address on the first-due engine or ladder truck. Drawings on the forms that will fit in the binder shall also be carried on the first-due apparatus. Drawings that will not fit in the binder, that could be useful during an incident shall be carried elsewhere on the engine or ladder. In every case there shall be a printed pre-fire survey recording the dates of the surveys.