

## TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT CHAPTER 2: SUGGESTED OPERATING GUIDELINES

Part 8: Strategic Guidelines

Subject: Public Assembly

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Effective Date: 07-01-95

Section: 2-8-5

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- 5.01 Purpose. To identify items concerning Public Assembly occupancies which affect fire/emergency response strategy.
- 5.02 Goal. Develop response strategies which recognize hazards and conditions associated with Public Assembly occupancies.
- 5.03 Special Problems.
- A) Public assembly occupancies pose a potential for high life loss.
  - B) Exits in public assembly are very critical because:
    - 1) Occupants are not familiar with their location.
    - 2) The lighting on the premises may be very poor.
    - 3) The locations may not be readily apparent.
    - 4) The exit markings may not be up to standards.
    - 5) The reliability of exits may not be up to standard.
  - C) Overcrowding in places of assembly is a very common practice. When an occupancy becomes overcrowded, the exits become blocked by people.
  - D) The use of combustible furnishings and decorations will enable the fire to start to spread at a rate that the occupants cannot get to the exits fast enough. Further, with most fire-resistive fabrics or plastics, toxic products of combustion will be released.
  - E) Exits and passageways may be blocked by chairs, tables, portable bars, etc.
  - F) Exits may be locked.
  - G) People exiting a building create crowds which can block fire department access. **Fire department access should not interfere with the orderly evacuation of the occupants.**

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- H) Panic - "a fear-induced flight behavior which serves to reduce the escape possibility of the group as a whole." However, studies conducted following recent fires show little evidence of panic during most fires. Instead people in these cases showed unselfish concern for the welfare of others, especially between common social groups.
  
- I) Evacuation can be made difficult by:
  - 1) Configuration of the premises.
  - 2) Placement of chairs, tables, or other fixtures.
  - 3) The location of the fire.
  - 4) Obstruction of the exits.
  - 5) Access.
  - 6) Physical and mental condition of the occupants.
  
- J) Employees may not have been trained to assist patrons in the event of fire.
  
- K) The building may have been constructed to serve a purpose other than public assembly. (Example: barn converted for nightclub use.)
  
- L) Vehicles to transport handicapped persons (persons confined to wheelchairs).

5.04 Strategic Considerations.

A) Pre-Planning.

- 1) Identify and track places of public assembly.
  - a) Code enforcement program.
  - b) CAD, owner/property, map books.
- 2) Identify and monitor peak times of public assembly.
- 3) Identify special events.
  - a) Festivals.
  - b) Reduced admission rates to attract crowds.
- 4) Monitor perimeter activities which could affect response.
  - a) Parking.
  - b) Crowd control measures.
  - c) Traffic routing.

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B) Inter-Agency.

- 1) Expect need for traffic/crowd control (law enforcement).
- 2) Emergency Medical Service responsible for triage, treatment and transportation of injured.
- 3) Medical Examiner is responsible for collection, identification and disposition of the dead.

C) Command Function.

- 1) Need for very visible, strong command
- 2) Fill staff positions early - consider priority order of Liaison, Safety, Public Information.
- 3) Collect situation and resource status information.
- 4) Expand management system anticipating the potential problems.

D) Operations Function.

- 1) Anticipate need to address the following.
  - a) Rescue.
    - 1) Access may be blocked by injured (or dead) persons.
    - 2) Secondary exits may require forcible entry.
  - b) Fire Control.
    - 1) Quick strong attack on fire may save lives.
    - 2) Ventilation (especially roof) may relieve trapped occupants.
    - 3) Access may be blocked by evacuating occupants.
  - c) Medical.
    - 1) Triage may be hampered by having victims located over large area.
    - 2) Treatment - expect multiple respiratory and burn problems.
    - 3) Transportation - do not overload any one hospital.
- 2) Conditions may indicate need for separate fire and medical branches.
- 3) Rotate personnel on regular basis. Direct unassigned personnel to Rehab or Resource area.
- 4) Consider de-briefing for all personnel.

E) Logistics Function.

- 1) Supplies.
  - a) Anticipate supply shortages (long boards, casualty bags).
  - b) Anticipate transport problems because of access.
- 2) Personnel support.
  - a) Air for SCBA.
  - b) Fluids and food.
  - c) Sanitary facilities (prolonged incident).
  - d) Shelter - weather extremes - hot or cold (buses?).
- 3) Need for specialized equipment.
  - a) Lighting.
  - b) Street barricades.
  - c) Wreckers (clearing blocked streets).

F) Planning Function.

- 1) Situation status.
- 2) Resource status.
- 3) Documentation.
  - a) Written log of activity.
  - b) Photographic log.
    - 1) Operations.
    - 2) Location of injured, deceased.
- 4) Casualty log.
  - a) Occupant count from management.
  - b) List of employees.
  - c) List of persons transported to hospitals.
    - 1) Ambulance transported.
    - 2) Private vehicle.

G) Finance Function.

- 1) Track cost of contracted equipment.
- 2) Track cost of supplies and services.

