



Coffee Break Training - Fire Protection Series

Inspection Techniques: Weather-related Preparations

No. FP-2010-48 November 30, 2010

Learning Objective: The student shall be able to list cold-weather related preparations for fire protection systems and equipment.

The cold and snow season has arrived, so fire departments in extreme climates should prepare for contingencies such as this snow covered hydrant. The fire department should work with the local street department or private snow removal service to provide access to essential fire protection equipment such as fire hydrants and fire department connections to sprinkler and standpipe systems.

Coffee Break Training 2007-8 provided a standard checklist for property owners to deal with cold weather impairments in fire sprinkler systems. Today, we'll identify some of the options that can be employed to keep fire hydrants accessible during snowstorms.



The fire department should work with the local street department to identify the locations of hydrants that should be cleared.

- Consider an Adopt-a-Hydrant program—through public service messages and door-to-door contacts, ask neighbors to shovel out hydrants when they do their walks.
- Work with the public works or street department to identify high priority hydrant locations that should be kept clear at all times. Hydrants should have 3 ft (1 m) of clearance around them whenever possible.
- Consider contracting with a private snow removal service to have hydrants cleared.
- Ask neighbors to immediately report any faulty hydrants that appear to be damaged or leaking.
- As a long-term project, consider the installation of hydrant “flags” or snow markers that identify a hydrant’s location beneath several feet of snow.
- Where fire departments employ drafting sites or dry hydrants, check periodically to confirm that the water access is not covered by ice or the dry hydrant plugged.

Every year, firefighters suffer debilitating or even fatal heart attacks shoveling snow from around fire hydrants. Perhaps with a little planning and cooperation from others, these needless injuries and deaths can be prevented.



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