



Coffee Break Training - Special Blend

Buildings Under Renovation or Construction

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HONORING THE FALLEN

Nine Killed
Boston, Massachusetts
June 17, 1972



During overhaul after a four-alarm fire in a hotel under renovation, the upper five floors of the seven-story building collapsed carrying nine firefighters to the street below. The collapse was attributed to the failure of an overloaded 7-inch steel column whose support had been weakened when a new duct had been cut beneath it. The extra weight of water used to fight the fire on the upper floors made conditions worse.

Buildings under construction or renovation are a breeding ground for problems. Accumulation of waste combustibles, limited access, minimal water supplies, and hazardous operations increase the challenge.

Here are a few tips when dealing with buildings under renovation or construction:

1. Visit the facilities and perform a risk assessment. Develop a preincident action plan in the event of a fire, collapse, or hazardous materials release.
2. Communicate the risk assessment and action plan to all emergency response personnel. Schedule training on the risk assessment and action plan.
3. Verify the condition of escape facilities including doors, walkways, stairs, ramps, fire escapes, or other means of egress.
4. Ensure that the storage of Class I and II flammable and combustible liquids exceeding 60 gal (227 L) is more than 50 ft (15.2 m) from the structure.
5. Verify that "No Smoking" signs are posted and enforced.
6. Review the owner's fire safety program for completeness and compliance.
7. Check to see that hot work (welding, cutting, torch-down roofing) and other hazardous operations are suitably protected.
8. Check fire protection features: especially fire extinguishers, hydrants, and temporary standpipe systems. If they are not operational, have them repaired or at least note their status in your preincident action plan.
9. Review structural plans with the project supervisor. If there are concerns about all or a portion of a project's structural integrity, report them to the local building code official.



This building eventually will be noncombustible, but there are plenty of hazards during construction.

For more information, refer to National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1, *Uniform Fire Code*™ Chapter 16, or *International Fire Code*® Chapter 14.



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