

Fire Safety & Security in High Rises

INTRODUCTION



The November/December 1993 issue of *NFPA Journal*^{®*}, one of the publications of the National Fire Protection Association, was a landmark issue to many professionals who deal with fire safety and security in high-rise buildings.

The issue opened with an editorial by George D. Miller, President of the National Fire Protection Association. President Miller wrote about the issue containing the results of the NFPA study on the World Trade Center bombing and, also, on the evacuation exercise at John Hancock Tower in Boston.

President Miller went on to express his concern, and that of NFPA, for the need to re-think the protection we have provided in high-rise buildings, and to increase our training efforts in that area. Here are the closing paragraphs of President Miller's editorial:

“It is routine for us to teach people to develop and practice fire escape plans in their homes. We must be equally diligent in communicating the need to plan and practice or emergency response in our cities' high-rises. At the very least, building owners and operators should provide employees, tenants, and other occupants with the security of state-of-the-art fire protection features and systems, as well as thoughtfully planned evacuation procedures.

“Anticipating the future of mega-high-rise building design is no small task for fire protection professionals, but it is an endeavor we must undertake. As our world changes and its dangers become increasingly complex, our approaches to fire protection must keep pace.”

As mentioned in the editorial, the articles on the John Hancock Tower and the World Trade Center presented an important awareness for the need to plan and train for evacuation in high-rise buildings. Also, the point was well made about the need for the combined efforts of the security force, and engineering department, and for the need to have a trained emergency response team to deal with the fire protection and life safety issues.

This issue also contained an outstanding study on sprinkler systems, which are the single most important piece of fire protection equipment we can have in a high-rise or, for that matter, any building.

It is because of this increased need that I have written this book. I am a Certified New York High-Rise Fire Safety Director. I teach the New York City High-Rise Safety Director Course at the University of New Haven. I also have been involved with the fire protection and security programs for some of the largest organizations in the country.

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I have seen the need, and I have written this book to address that need. I have written with the security force, the engineering department, and the emergency response team in mind.

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INTRODUCTION (CONTINUED)



This is not a highly-technical work for those who design and engineer the systems and equipment that make up our fire protection in those buildings. Those professionals have many fine technical works as reference material.

This is a “user’s guide.” It is a basic reference for those who have not had extensive training in fire fighting or in the design aspects of the protection systems. It is simple and practical, helping those people involved with the fire safety and security to understand what the dangers are, what is available to aid them, and how to deal with those dangers.

Much of this work is based on the Laws of New York City, and the High-Rise Program of the New York City Fire Department. New York City has one of the largest and finest fire departments in the world. New York City also has the most high-rise buildings of any city in the world.

Because of the numbers of high-rise buildings, and because of the rash of high-rise fires that devastated parts of New York City in the 1970’s, there is a wealth of experience and information available from the New York City Fire Department that cannot be matched anywhere. It is because of these factors that the High-Rise Program began in that City.

While most of this work is based on that experience, and on those Laws, I firmly believe that the information contained here is applicable to high-rise structures in any location.

I hope that this work will contribute to the life safety and security efforts of those involved with those issues in high-rise buildings everywhere.