

Firefighter Emergency Escape Systems



New York State Department of Labor
Public Employee Safety and Health
(PESH)

Article 2 Section 27-a

- August 2012 – Signed by Governor Cuomo
- 4.c. Safety and Health Standards



Who is Covered?

- All public employees (including paid and volunteers) who are firefighters, except those employed in a city with a population of over one million.
- Any firefighter determined to be at risk of entrapment at elevations during interior firefighting.

Entrapment at Elevations

- Any elevation above the surrounding terrain that would reasonably be expected to cause injury to a firefighter exiting by means of an opening that is not designed as an exit, should be considered in a department's risk assessment.
- For example, a building that is one-story in the front may be three-stories because of grade on another side.



Risk Assessments

Fire Departments must prepare written risk assessments to:

- Determine if there are firefighters who could become trapped at elevations above the ground floor of a structure during interior firefighting operations.
- Identify who those firefighters are.
- Determine the appropriate emergency escape system, including any equipment that might be needed, to address the hazard.

Risk Assessments should include:

- an overview of the types and occupancies of structures in the areas where you provide fire protection;
- consideration of other jurisdictions where you provide mutual aid to perform interior structural firefighting; and
- an examination of the standard operating procedures that the Fire Department follows at fires where a firefighter could become trapped while performing interior firefighting.

Emergency Escape Systems

- Most emergency escape systems consist of safety ropes and system components, but may also include any other systems that are:
 - Compliant with NFPA 1983, 2006 edition or newer;
 - Certified by a nationally recognized safety testing or certification organization, and
 - Recognized by DOL through regulation.



Emergency Escape Systems

- Ensure existing emergency escape systems meet the standards and that recommended practices of the system’s manufacturer are followed.
- Ensure existing systems adequately perform their function by:
 - Checking the labels or stamps on equipment
 - Checking any documents on equipment specifications
 - Identify any limitations of the equipment (by contacting the supplier or approval agency about the equipment, if necessary)

Emergency Escape Systems

- Train firefighters on the limitations of the emergency escape systems.
- Instruct firefighters not to use emergency escape systems beyond their limitations.
- Ensure the emergency escape systems have no visible defects.
- Follow the manufacturer’s instructions to use, clean, maintain, and store emergency escape systems.

Emergency Escape Systems

- Instruct firefighters to report any defects in the emergency escape systems.
- Correct any identified defects or take immediate action to remove defective systems from service.



What is a Manufactured System?

- Equipment that is complete and provided as a single unit.
- The system is tested as a whole and has third-party certification.
- Meets the NFPA 1983 standard (2006 or newer version).

What are Component Systems?

- Life safety harnesses, belts, carabiners, descent control devices, rope-grab devices, and snap links.
- These components must have approval from an approved 3rd party product safety testing and certification organization.

What Standard Must Emergency Escape Systems Conform To?

- Escape ropes and system components shall conform to the requirements of the NFPA Standard 1983, in effect at the time of their manufacture.
- Escape ropes and system components purchased after the Department of Labor regulations (§ 800.7) went into effect in December 2009 shall conform to the NFPA 1983 standard version 2006 or newer.
- If you are using equipment that conforms to an earlier version of NFPA 1983, you may continue to use it as long as the equipment is serviceable. New purchases must meet or exceed NFPA 1983, version 2006 or newer.



Equipment Selection

- Based upon the results of the risk assessment, select and provide equipment to each firefighter according to the risk.
- The selection decisions and factors evaluated must be communicated to each firefighter.

Training

- Ensure that the firefighter is instructed, trained and experienced in the proper use of the emergency escape system that is issued to them.
- Training must be comprehensive and understandable.
- The employer must keep records on the training and certify that the training is done.

Inspection of Emergency Escape Equipment

- Develop a written inspection schedule for ropes and system components to be completed monthly.
- Review and update written inspection schedule at least annually.
- Any ropes or system components with repairable defects must be tagged as unsafe and stored in a secure manner until repairs are complete.
- Any escape systems or components which are unserviceable must be destroyed.

Thank You

For additional information contact
PESH at (518) 457-3815
or your local district office.
