Course Learning Outcomes for Unit II

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

2. Apply ethical standards to situations regarding fire protection standards and requirements.

3. Explain how chemistry and the physics of fire influence the fundamental principles involved with fire, such as design criteria and installation requirements.

Reading Assignment

Chapter 3:
Definitions

Chapter 4:
General Requirements

Unit Lesson

As mentioned in the Unit I lesson, NFPA 25 is not all-inclusive as it only addresses the operating condition of the system rather than the adequacy of the system (Klaus, 2013). With this insight, we must know how the governing standard influences the systems in our communities and response areas. As professionals, we must be knowledgeable in all aspects of FPS, including design, installation, operation, maintenance and testing, the pros and cons for each system, and the proposed application (e.g., what is burning, how much is burning, how hot is it burning). As an example, NFPA 25 requires the owner to maintain water filled piping at a minimum temperature of 40 degrees (Klaus, 2013). Without a thorough understanding of the application and design of FPS, potential malfunctions (i.e., freezing), could occur. Please take a moment to view this short video:

- NFPA Codes, Standards, Training for Water Based Fire Protection Systems
  http://youtu.be/u0MOGwAyZ8M

If we fail to learn our craft and become knowledgeable professionals, we become a link in the preventable chain of events that is associated with every injury or fatality that results from non-operating systems. There is an old adage that says an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. By knowing our craft and ensuring that the standard is met, we are both the preventative measure and the cure.

Have you ever heard of the “Charleston 9?” Most of you probably remember the tragic furniture store fire in Charleston, SC, on June 18, 2007, in which nine firefighters lost their lives. Use a search engine to search the Internet for video footage of the incident. The link below takes you to the an NIST briefing video:


What can be learned from the NIST briefing? Would a properly installed and functioning FPS have made a difference?

In our tradition-steeped profession, FPSs are not exciting or cool, but they do work to save lives. From a firefighter standpoint, we are conflicted; we love the concept of FPSs and how they influence safety; however, we hate anything that puts the fire out and, quite frankly, takes the fun out of the job (fighting fires). However, if we truly believe in and advocate firefighter safety, we must not only believe in, but advocate for proper design, application, and operation of FPS. If we do not or cannot commit to this level of professionalism, is our commitment to safety any more than an owner who refuses properly maintain their system? For most
firefighters, an oath was taken to protect and serve. The oath was all-inclusive. As such, you must live, eat, and sleep FPS and be as much an advocate for their proper use and design as you are spec'ing out a new apparatus. Any less commitment is truly a disservice to the service. This is your ethical and moral obligation to yourself, your brothers and sisters, your family, and your community.

Reference