

Fire Safety Plans (FSPs)

Lacombe County's Guide
to Developing a
Fire Safety Plan



March 2021

LACOMBE
COUNTY



Introduction

Experience has taught us that the risks for large losses by fire are very real, especially for buildings under construction, resulting in the Province's creation of Fire Safety Plan regulations. Lacombe County believes these additional requirements and a well thought out Fire Safety Plan will reduce the likelihood and seriousness of fire related incidents.

The requirement and content for a Fire Safety Plan is outlined in the National Fire Code – Alberta Edition (NFC-AE) and National Building Code-Alberta Edition (NBC-AE). Both of these are provincial legislation and apply to all jurisdictions throughout Alberta. The regulation states that the Fire Safety Plan shall be prepared in cooperation with, and shall be acceptable to, the authority having jurisdiction.

In Lacombe County, the authority for acceptance of the Fire Safety Plan is the Lacombe County Fire Services, carried out by the Lacombe County Fire Chief. Therefore, the purpose of this document is to share the expectations around what an acceptable Fire Safety Plan looks like within Lacombe County.

The regulation applies to projects of all sizes including all construction sites which includes:

- the construction of new buildings,
- the modification or renovation of existing buildings, and
- the demolition of the whole or part of existing buildings.

Lacombe County's expectation is that the plan will reflect the complexity and size of the project and that it is both reasonable and relevant to the project. It is quite possible that the plan may need to evolve along with the project.



Fire Safety Plans must be compliant to any actions or conditions set out by the Lacombe County Fire Chief. For example, if you plan to conduct any hot work (soldering, welding etc.) you must have at least one suitable and current portable fire extinguisher in the proximity of the work. In cases where an objective statement is made you will have a larger opportunity to consider options which will meet the stated objective. An example of this could be a situation in which you need to disable a fire detection system for a period during your work. An alternative method of providing that protection is required to be approved by the fire department. Alternatives considered would be expected to provide the same level of protection but in a different way. An acceptable alternative could be provided by the continuous attendance of a fire guardian patrolling the building but there may be other acceptable alternatives. In some cases we could even relax the requirements if other risks are reduced, such as the closure of the building to the public.

Lacombe County Fire Services wants your project to proceed in a safe and efficient manner. We promise to review your plans promptly and to fairly evaluate your plan relative to the provincial requirements. Although, we do not have staff that can write the plan for you, we would be happy to discuss elements and offer some suggestions that are proving difficult for you.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Questions and inquiries about this document should be forward to Lacombe County Fire Services at LCFS@lacombecounty.com or 403-782-8959

Measures in a Fire Safety Plan

Buildings

Emergency Procedures

● **Sounding the fire alarm.** This could be as simple as yelling “fire” for a project as simple as a single family dwelling. For a multi-unit dwelling the use of a signal horn might be more suitable. Obviously what is important here is that the occupants can hear and identify the signal as a life safety emergency and take appropriate action.

● **Notify the fire department.** This is reliably accomplished by dialing 9-1-1. All workers must be prepared to give the dispatcher a reliable address, including but not limited to legal land descriptions and/or civic addresses (blue sign).

● **Instructing occupants on procedures when alarm sounds.** In projects where the only occupants are the construction workers this can be as simple as evacuate to an identified muster point and have a warden or supervisor account for all workers on the site. If your project includes work to a building occupied by the public something more and specific to that project is required.

● **Evacuating occupants.** Again, for projects that involve buildings occupied by the public the plan needs to address how the occupants will be removed. It is especially important to identify those persons requiring additional assistance and just who will provide that assistance. Construction projects often include the temporary closure of an exit route and occupants need to be informed of the alternate arrangements.

● **Confining, controlling and extinguishing the fire.** We will expect the plan to include realistic prioritization in the completion of fire separations when the design calls for them. If separations are being removed we would expect the duration to be minimized. If multiple separations are compromised we would expect a more detailed plan of how a fire would be controlled. We won't expect the occupants to be firefighters but we think it is reasonable to have persons engaged in fire watch activities to be trained and competent in the use of fire extinguishers and to have one in hand. We also believe it is reasonable to have at least one current and functioning multi-purpose fire extinguisher with a minimum 10A, 60BC ULC rating. Larger projects require additional well positioned extinguishers.

● **Control of fire hazards within the building.** Plans that include good housekeeping, proper storage of combustibles, limiting the storage to what is required for the near future work, proper facilities for the disposal of rags, selection and placement of temporary heaters are all examples of fire hazards and things we would expect to see in your plans. If you don't plan to provide temporary heat there is no expectation of us that you would include this in your plan. If the project is using temporary utilities, means to isolate or disconnect must be provided and identified. Permits are required in Alberta for temporary installations.

● **Inspection and maintenance of building facilities.** Hallways, corridors, stairwells and all egress routes need to be maintained in a manner that will allow them to function as designed. Temporary hand and guard rails are expected to be in place. Warning barriers must in place in those instances where these objectives cannot be met. The inspection of these safeguards needs to be completed by competent workers. The codes also specifically define the inspection requirements for a fire watch including a final check four hours after the completion of hot work in some circumstances. The safety plan should identify if and when hot work will be allowed during construction and under what conditions.



Construction Sites - General

Your Fire Safety Plan needs to describe how you will maintain access for the fire department to your site. We need to be able to access all buildings on the site as well as have access to hydrants or alternative water supplies designated for firefighting.

Fire Hydrants

If your project is within the protection of an existing hydrant, you may only need to show that the hydrant will provide sufficient fire water supply for the current project. If your project includes the installation of fire hydrants, we will expect these to be tested and fully operational before you begin construction above grade.

Access

Lacombe County Fire Services trucks are big and heavy and are not capable of traveling on steep grades or soft soils. If your project is within 45 meters of a municipal improved roadway, you likely already meet our expectations of access by road. If your project includes the creation of roads we will want to be sure they will be in place and meet our needs, again before construction above grade.

You will be expected to describe how you will reduce the risk of fire extending beyond your project. The closer you are to an existing building, especially if occupied, the greater the need for these measures. If there are no other developed properties nearby we won't expect a significant effort in protecting them.

Civic addressing must be visible from the street using the most common direction of approach. Acceptable options include a simple temporary sign with the address painted on a piece of plywood. The numbers and letters should be a minimum of 6" high and 1" wide, located at the entrance and visible from the road. If the project includes multiple buildings we might also want a crude map. The code requires a 24/7/365 emergency phone number, name and address so that we can contact someone in the event of an emergency. We suggest that this be included on the front or back of this sign. Smaller characters are reasonable for contact information.

Trash and trash bins need to be located a reasonable distance from the buildings. The distance is not prescribed but should be reasonable relative to the space available, the bin size and the amount of combustible material within the bin.