**Chapter 24: Preincident Planning**

**Chief Concepts**

* Preincident planning helps your department to make better command decisions, because important information is assembled before the emergency occurs.
* Preincident planning is the process of obtaining information about a building or a property and storing the information in an accessible system. It is intended to help the IC make informed decisions when an emergency incident occurs at a specific location.
* The use of modern information technology has greatly enhanced the ability of fire departments to capture, store, organize, update, and retrieve preincident plans. Accurate and current information such as drawings, maps, satellite and aerial imagery, photographs, descriptive text, lists of hazardous materials, and MSDSs can be made available instantly to the fire fighters who need it during an emergency incident.
* A preincident plan usually includes one or more diagrams that shows details such as the building location and layout, access routes, entry points, exposures, and hydrant locations and alternative water supplies.
* The location and nature of any special hazards to the public or to fire fighters should be highlighted on the diagrams. Information about the actual building should include its height and overall dimensions, its type of construction, the nature of the occupancy, and the types of contents in different areas of the building. Additional information should include interior floor plans, stairway and elevator locations, utility shut-off locations, and information about built-in fire detection and suppression systems.
* A preincident plan should be prepared for every property that poses a high life-safety hazard to its occupants or presents safety risks for responding fire fighters. Preincident plans should also be prepared for properties that have the potential to create a large fire or conflagration.
* The information that goes into a preincident plan is gathered during a preincident survey.
* A preincident survey should be conducted with the knowledge and cooperation of the property owner or occupant.
* The preincident survey is conducted in a systematic fashion, beginning with the outside of the building and moving inside. A good, systematic approach starts at the roof and works down through the building, covering every level of the structure, including the basement.
* The fire fighters conducting the preincident survey should prepare sketches or drawings to show the building layout and the location of important features such as exits.
* Building layout and access information is particularly important during the response phase of an emergency incident. The preincident plan should provide information that would be valuable to units en route to an incident. Points of access into the building must also be noted.
* The preincident survey must obtain essential information about the building that is important for size-up, including the building’s construction, height, area, use, and occupancy; the presence of hazardous materials; locations of exposed structures; and fire protection system information.
* To conduct a preincident survey:
  + Schedule the survey in advance.
  + Make contact with a responsible person.
  + Present a neat and professional image.
  + Identify yourself by name, title, and department.
  + Ensure that a representative accompanies you during the survey.
  + Take notes and pictures as needed, and start outside.
  + Note the building location.
  + Identify the building construction.
  + Identify the building use and occupancy.
  + Note any life hazards.
  + Note the access points to the interior of the building.
  + Note the utility shut-off locations.
  + Assess the apparatus access to the building.
  + Note hydrant locations and alternative water supplies.
  + Note ventilation concerns.
  + Record information about built-in fire detection and suppression systems.
  + Sketch floor plans.
  + Note the elevator and stairway locations.
  + Review exit plans and exit locations.
  + Identify any special hazards and hazardous materials.
  + Note the building exposures.
  + Anticipate the type of incident expected.
  + Identify any special resources needed.
  + Complete and file the preincident survey form.
* During the preincident survey, collect tactical information about water supply considerations and locations of shut-offs for utilities.
* To facilitate a safe search and rescue operation at a site, the preincident survey should identify all entrances and exits to a building, including fire escapes and roof exits.
* To ensure a safe forcible entry operation, the preincident survey should identify any exterior and interior access issues and the locations where forcible entry may be required.
* To support safe ladder operations, the preincident survey should identify the best locations for placing ground ladders or aerial apparatus.
* To ensure safe ventilation operations, the preincident survey should identify the best locations for ventilation and determine whether the HVAC system can be used for ventilation.
* The following occupancies involve unique considerations:
  + High-rise buildings—Special issues include difficulty in gaining access and the large number of occupants to evacuate.
  + Public-assembly venues—These structures are often very large and contain large numbers of people to be evacuated.
  + Health care facilities—These structures are very large and contain nonambulatory occupants who need assistance in evacuating.
  + Detention and correctional facilities—Security concerns may make it difficult for fire fighters to gain rapid access to the building or for occupants to exit the facility.
  + Residential occupancies—Include apartment complexes and condominiums. The preincident plan should identify the locations of sleeping areas and the water supplies.
* Preincident planning should anticipate the types of incidents that could occur at locations such as airports, bridges, and tunnels, as well as incidents along highways or railroad lines, or at construction sites.