



## **FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY DIRECTOR (FLSD) OVERVIEW**

### **The Role of the FLSD in New York City High-Rise Buildings**

#### **I. Fire Safety Director History**

In 1973, New York City introduced a Local Law on Fire Safety in High-Rise Business (Group-B Occupancy) Buildings to mitigate fire emergencies in these structures. Local Law 5 mandated that these buildings are required to have a certified Fire Safety Director (FSD) on duty for the premises. The FSD is responsible for the life safety of the occupants within the buildings as well as fire protection systems. In the 1980's, a FSD also became a requirement in (Group-R1 Occupancy) hotel high-rise buildings and/or in a building that is equipped with a fire alarm system that features a two-way voice communication system, (i.e., major sport stadiums and arenas, malls, hospitals, etc.)

#### **a. FSD Responsibilities**

The FSD is hired by the owner of the building to make sure that all fire safety regulations are in compliance and to implement the fire safety plan. An FSD is required to be on-duty when the building has occupancy of 100 persons above and below grade or 500 persons in the entire building.

The main FSD responsibilities are to operate the fire alarm control panel (FACP) at the lobby Fire Command Center (FCC), make manual voice announcements during a fire emergency to the building occupants, and liaison with the fire department upon their arrival. From the FCC, fire safety director controls and supervises the floor evacuations in the immediate threat area according to the approved building fire safety plan.

During an emergency, the FSD must remain composed and in control of the situation. The FSD will issue emergency instructions to building occupants in a clear and concise manner. Prior to the arrival of the fire department, the FSD's composure has a major influence on the behavior of the building occupants.

The FSD also develops initial and annual fire safety training programs for the floor warden teams, brigade response members and building occupants. The FSD maintains recordkeeping of the building fire protection systems, fire inspections as well as conducting and supervising fire drills.

When the FSD is absent, a Deputy FSD assumes his or her role. At all other times, when the building has less than 100 persons above or below the ground floor, a building

evacuation supervisor (BES) must be on duty. The BES is trained by the FSD and requires no fire department certification.

## **II. Emergency Action Plan (EAP) History**

Following the events of September 11, 2001, New York City (NYC) needed to implement new all-hazard (non-fire) emergency action plans for high rise-office buildings. In 2002, the FSDA testified before the City Council and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to enhance life safety needs within these high-rise buildings. The Association supported the creation of the NIST *“The National Construction Safety Team Act”* to investigate major building collapses and structural fire incidents, and secured from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) a commitment to create a High-Rise Building Safety Advisory Committee.

The Association also formed the first City Task Force to develop a High-Rise Office Building EAP Plan for emergencies other than fire. Upon completing their tasks for these all-hazard (non-fire) emergencies, the FSD Task Force joined forces with the FDNY Bureau of Fire Prevention. Based on this joint venture, a formalized Emergency Action Plan was developed. The EAP Plan and other associated requirements to implement were included in the adoption of Local Law-26 (LL-26) in 2004. The High-Rise Office Building EAP specifically addresses and mitigates emergencies other than fires. LL-5, however, remains active for fire emergencies. LL-26 enhances both building and fire codes so as to increase the likelihood that all occupants will evacuate safely during non-fire emergencies by man-made disasters such as an explosion, biological, chemical or hazardous material incidents or releases, and natural disasters such as a hurricane, tornado, flooding, etc. or other perceived threats.

### **a. EAP Director Responsibilities**

LL-26 requires the designated EAP Director to be responsible for the implementation of the building Emergency Action Plan. The EAP Director is hired by the owner of the building to make sure that the all-hazard emergency regulations are in compliance. An EAP Director is required to be on-duty when the building has occupancy of 100 persons above and below grade or 500 persons in the entire building.

One of the main responsibilities of the EAP Director is to gather a situation awareness as to the EAP threat whether internal or external to the building and communicate the all-hazard threat to the tenants via the FACP voice communication system at the Fire Command Center (FCC). The EAP Director controls and supervises the actions and/or evacuations in the immediate threat area according to the approved Plan and is a liaison to the first responders upon their arrival.

During an emergency the EAP Director will issue emergency instructions to building occupants in a clear, concise and timely manner. Prior to the arrival of the first responders, the EAP Director’s composure has a major influence on the behavior of the building occupants.

The EAP Director also develops all-hazard training programs for the floor life safety warden teams, emergency response brigade, building occupants and coordinates efforts with neighboring buildings. The EAP Director must also maintain all EAP related documents, as well as conducting and supervising EAP drills.

When the EAP Director is absent, a Deputy EAP Director assumes his or her role. At all other times, when the building has less than 100 persons above or below the ground floor, a building evacuation supervisor (BES) must be on duty. The BES is trained by the EAP Director and requires no fire department certification.

### **III. Fire and Life Safety Director**

The new role of the FSD/EAP Director have combined fire safety, all-hazard (non-fire) threats and medical emergencies into one in-building emergency response position that must meet the following qualifications:

#### **a. The FLSD Qualification Criteria:**

- 1) The FLSD candidate is required to attend a 20-hour fire safety training course at a school approved by the fire department and passes their examination
  
- 2) Upon completing the FLSD course the candidate must take an 11-hour EAP and Medical Emergency training course at a school approved by the fire department and passes their examination
  
- 3) Pass a fire department FLSD and EAP computerized examinations that are administered at Fire Headquarters
  
- 4) The final qualification step is passing a fire department on-site building examination. This on-site assessment includes an oral examination of the Fire/EAP Comprehensive Plan and a practicum on threat scenarios; as well as building knowledge for evacuation modes; fire protection systems, building systems and Fire/EAP life safety measures. The candidate will also demonstrate FACP/FCC Center operations and manual elevator recall operations for Firemen's Service and manual (independent) modes; Upon passing these three phases of training, the FLSD candidate will be awarded a Certificate of Fitness license that is satisfactory for a three-year period.

**NOTE:** The position of a fire and life safety director should a competent person who can take appropriate life safety actions prior to arrival of the First Responders, have general operating procedures for emergency operations, incident management system and life safety measures; and who can demonstrate general prerequisite knowledge on the fundamentals of leadership, adopted local laws and regulations applicable to tall buildings. Part of the FLSD skill sets is to remain current with understanding these vertical challenges and to the ever-changing environments within a high-rise, super and mega tall building occupancies.