



New Zealand Fire Service

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11 May 2016

Geoff Merryweather

By email: www.fyi.co.nz

Dear Mr Merryweather

Official Information Request – Number of multiple building fires in commercial, sprinklered premises

I refer to your official information request which was received to the web communications email address 11 April 2016. In accordance with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982, please see below the information as requested.

As no time period was specified in the request, we have provided data based on the last five calendar years.

1. From 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2015 we attended 386 fires in commercial storage buildings. As most of the categories for storage is based around the product being stored rather than the design of the building, it is not easy to pick all the warehouse type buildings. There are two categories that use the word “warehouse” in their descriptions and these accounted for 134 of those 386 fires.
2. From 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2015 there could only be found three incidents where fires in commercial storage may have spread to further exposures:
 - One appears to have involved multiple buildings, but the data is unclear;
 - One began in a manufacturing area and spread to two cool stores, one at the same address and one on a neighbouring property. The data suggests that both cool stores were exposed to the original manufacturing premises rather than spreading from one to the other; and
 - The third began in a storage building and spread through four other buildings on the same property. Commentary in the report describes the other buildings as sheds, and further suggests that the fire originated from a vegetation exterior to the primary building.

A further 16 fires were found involving commercial/industrial buildings where the fire spread from one building to another. Four of these appear to involve multiple addresses.

3. For the three first found in commercial storage above:

- The first does not have an age for the primary building, but shows one of the buildings as having being built from 1970-1991;
- The second lists all the buildings as constructed between 1970-1991; and
- The third list all the buildings as constructed between 1992-2005.

For the other commercial/industrial buildings the construction dates were recorded as below(first building involved only):

- 1900-1945, 2;
- 1946-1969, 3;
- 1970-1991, 6;
- 1992-2005, 1;
- 2006 onwards, 1; and
- Unknown, 3

4. Based on either our records of fire alarms systems connected to the NZFS, or the information recorded in the fire incident report, the following was found in regard to sprinklers in the commercial storage fires:

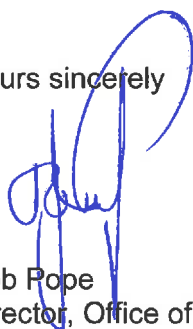
- Two of the primary buildings show no indication of having sprinklers present; and
- The third primary building apparently had a drencher system installed which did not operate due to having been shut down.

Of the 16 other commercial/industrial building fires, only one had a sprinkler system recorded, but no details have been provided about its activation or effectiveness.

5. Of the two primary buildings with sprinkler systems that spread to other buildings (answer 4) none appear to have spread across property boundaries.

6. Information regarding the activation area of the sprinkler system (or number of heads operating) in each case is not available.

Yours sincerely



Rob Pope
Director, Office of the Chief Executive