

Free essay on history of fire service

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Fire has caused substantial damage to human life and property in countless incidents. Human beings developed various techniques and equipments in order to stop and reduce losses caused by fire in different parts of the world. Fire fighting, through different techniques, exists since time immemorial. Evidences suggest that fire fighting services existed in Roman Empire centuries ago. Augustus, the emperor of Roman Empire, instituted a well organised department of fire fighting services. This essay proposes to discuss history of fire fighting services and analyses the mechanisms that were used by fire fighters in different phases of time.

Fire fighting equipment and methods are used to turn off the fires and minimize the damages caused due to fire. Fire fighting techniques facilitate the removal of the single or more of three major elements that are required for ignition i. e. oxygen, fuel and heat. Fire fighting techniques interrupt or break the chain of ignition. In 24 BC, Augustus, a Roman emperor developed or formed a group of fire-fighting persons. Augustus developed rules and regulations to prevent the fire (Brief History of the Fire Service).

During the time of pre-industrial era, all major and large cities have watchmen who used to blow a horn and create sound of alarm in case of any fire took place. The principle equipment used in fire fighting during ancient Rome and early modern time was bucket filled with water. Fire fighters used to pass the bucket from one hand to another to throw the water on fire. Another essential fire fighting equipment was an axe, which was used to eradicate the fuel in order to protect fire from spread. The axe was also used to develop openings that provide ways to the smoke and heat to go outside the building or fire place. In case of large fire, ropes and long hooks were

used to pull buildings that are located on the way of approaching fire in order to create fire breaks. Later on people started using explosives for same purpose (Blackstone).

In year 1666, “ great fire of London” encouraged insurance companies to develop new techniques to protect properties and people from fire. The efforts deployed by the insurance companies resulted in formation of fire brigades. Till year 1865, government was not involved in this project, but in year 1865 government adopted these brigades. Government formed “ London’s Metropolitan Fire Brigade”. During 17th and early 18th century there were no standards in place for fire department operations. In year in 1830, for the first time fire operations standards were developed and implement in Edinburgh, Scotland. These standards were developed to ensure the good functioning and effective results from the fire departments (Blackstone).

On other in America, after the broke out of major Boston fire in year 1631, the government developed and implemented fire regulations for the first time. In year 1648, the government of New Amsterdam i. e. New York, has appointed fire wardens. This was the first time in North America that any government has formed public fire department. During 17th century, 1st fire engine was developed and use of tubs started for carried out water on the long poles, or on runners or on wheels; however, the use of bucket was still prevailing to supply the water on fire site. The function of tub was to reserve the water. During 17th century people started using home pumps and hand operated pipes to fill the buckets (Mardon).

During late 17th century leather hosepipe was invented in Netherland that

allowed fire fighters to get more close to the fire site without damaging their engine and without losing the fast supply of water. During that time invention of pumping devices allowed fire fighters to fetch the water from ponds, lakes and rivers. During early 19th century leather hosepipes started using copper rivets on the place of hand stitching. Properly developed and firmed hose pipes allowed fire fighters to pass the water from stairways, inside the buildings and from narrow passages.

During 1830 steam pump fire engine was introduced to fire department and by mid 19th century it was used in several large cities. Fire departments have used either salaried employees or volunteers (non-salaried) employees. Volunteer or non-salaried fire fighters primarily work in smaller communities and salaried fire fighters work in the cities. The major development in fire departments of any states such as United States or United Kingdom occurred during the late 19th century. During 1880s and 90s salaried fire fighters became essential element of Municipal Corporation. In large sense, the development took place in fire departments such as use of advance information technology, and use of different vehicles to prevent the fire from spread are recent development (Mardon).

After going through the history of fire services and various aspects of the subject, it can be concluded that fire fighting services exist in the human society since ancient times. Earliest evidences of a well structured fire fighting service department are found in Roman Empire but fire fighting has been done in different societies through different techniques. Fire, due to various factors, was very common in ancient times and human beings lost countless lives and enormous amount of property in fire caused accidents.

Human societies developed different ways to protect life and property against different kinds of fire through different mechanisms.

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