



The History of Firefighting in Poland and Its Role in Safety Education

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Summary

The history of firefighting in Poland illustrates the development of fire protection systems and their significance for safety education. From medieval fire regulations to the modern structures of the State Fire Service, this document highlights the role of prevention, training, and public awareness campaigns in increasing societal awareness and protecting lives and property.

Keywords: History; Fire Service; Education; Safety; Prevention; Protection

Introduction

Education plays a crucial role in shaping society, and one of its essential aspects is raising awareness about safety and the role of institutions responsible for protecting lives and property. The history of firefighting serves as an excellent example of the evolution of knowledge, technology, and organization, which over time have contributed to increasingly effective protection against threats. From ancient fire brigades to modern fire departments, the development of firefighting illustrates the importance of knowledge transfer and the implementation of new solutions in safety education.

History, Tradition and the Firefighter's Ethos

The historical background of firefighting is a fundamental element in understanding the modern fire service, whose roots reach deep into the past. This tradition, rich in symbolism and deeply embedded in the spirit of service, not only reflects heroism and dedication but also serves as a moral compass guiding firefighters' action. Understanding this history is a crucial aspect of

education, both in a professional and societal context.

The first organized forms of fire protection emerged as early as antiquity. In ancient Rome, around 6 AD, Emperor Augustus established a fire brigade known as Cohortes Vigilum. This unit, consisting of approximately 7,000 men, was responsible for extinguishing fires and maintaining order in the city. During the Middle Ages, European cities also began to implement organized fire protection measures, often overseen by craft guilds.

The true development of firefighting began after the Great Fire of London in 1666, which destroyed a significant portion of the city. In response to this catastrophic event, the first organized firefighting groups were formed, equipped with more advanced tools such as hand-operated pumps. It was not until the 19th century that firefighting organizations experienced significant growth, leading to the implementation of professional training and modern firefighting technologies within the broader framework of fire protection systems.

In Poland, the history of firefighting dates back to the Middle Ages. The first recorded fire protection regulations can be found in documents from the 14th century – these were municipal council decrees known as fire ordinances. These regulations reached their most refined form by the late 17th century, as they established preventive fire safety measures. An attempt to create a fire brigade in Poland was made by Jan Rudnicki in 1829. However, the outbreak of the November Uprising prevented the realization of this project. Ultimately, a fire brigade was officially organized in 1834. It is also worth noting that in the 18th century, due to the decline of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its partition by Austria, Prussia, and Russia, fire protection regulations varied significantly, as each partitioning power imposed its own legal framework. Poland's regained independence in 1918 brought hope for the establishment of a professional fire service free from foreign influence. In 1921, the Congress of Delegates of Fire Brigades of the Republic of Poland was organized in Warsaw. Following this event, the Main Association of Fire Brigades was established, bringing together all regional fire service associations. From that point on, it became the highest governing body of the fire service in Poland. In 1950, the Polish Parliament (Sejm) passed a law on fire protection and its reorganization. A new chapter in the history of firefighting began after the political transformation, when on August 24, 1991, two key laws were enacted: one concerning the State Fire Service (Państwowa Straż Pożarna, PSP) and another on fire protection regulations. On July 1, 1992, the State Fire Service (PSP) was officially established as a professional, uniformed, and specialized formation equipped with advanced firefighting tools and tasked with responding to fires, natural disasters, and other local emergencies.

Fire Protection Education

The development of the fire service has involved not only improvements in equipment and organization but also a growing public awareness of fire hazards. One of the key elements of effective fire protection is education, both for firefighters and citizens. Training programs, informational campaigns, and school activities undoubtedly contribute to increased safety and a reduction in the number of fires.

Modern educational systems place increasing emphasis on prevention and crisis response training. Knowledge of first aid principles, evacuation procedures, and fire extinguisher operation can be life-saving in emergency situations. Firefighters not only extinguish fires but also engage in educational activities, organizing training sessions and demonstrations that teach people how to minimize risks and respond effectively to potential threats.

Conclusions

The history of firefighting is not merely a record of the past but also an essential lesson that should be an integral part of every

society's education. Learning from past mistakes, adapting new technologies, and promoting safety awareness are key aspects that enable more effective prevention of threats. Firefighters, in fulfilling their mission, not only save lives but also impart valuable lessons that contribute to building a safer and more informed society. Therefore, fire protection education should be regarded as a fundamental component of general education, from early childhood to specialized professional training [1-10].

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Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.

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