



HOME OFFICE

(FIRE SERVICE DEPARTMENT)

Horseferry House, Dean Ryle Street, London S.W.1

Telegrams: *Emblax, Sowest, London*

Telephone: *victoria 6655 Ext.*

Please address any reply to

THE UNDER SECRETARY
OF STATE

22nd May, 1963.

and quote: FIR 744/11/1

Your reference: 61

Dear Chief Officer,

48476

Risk of fire spread from storage areas

Concurrently with my writing this letter, the Ministry of Housing is circularizing local planning authorities with regard to open storage of timber and other combustible materials, drawing attention to the fact that the risk of fire spreading from storage sites can be mitigated by adequate clearance distances between the storage and adjoining property. The Circular, the relevant extract from which is appended, reminds planning authorities that this is a matter upon which Chief Fire Officers will be able to advise.

A recent report by the Joint Fire Research Organisation, "Spacing from timber stacks to reduce fire spread", indicates that whilst for a burning building suitable separation distances can be calculated in terms of the area and distribution of the radiating openings in the building, for a timber stack it must be calculated in terms of the size of flames from the stack and this is to some extent related to the base area of the fire. With the aid of observations of an actual fire at a timber yard, a Table of separation distances has been calculated and is reproduced here:-

Base area of stack	Separation distance from edge of yard
ft.	ft.
400	20
1,600	36
3,600	51
6,400	65
10,000	80
40,000	150

The separation distances are for spacing of timber storage from adjoining property and they assume that fire brigade protection for the adjoining property, - for example, cooling jets, - will be available within twenty minutes. If a water shortage were anticipated or the site was congested, thus hampering fire fighting, then larger separation or additional water supplies or both might be necessary.

Within the timber store itself, spacing would mainly be dictated by access requirements for fire-fighting equipment. Such spacing might not, of itself, prevent the spread of fire from stack to stack and it will be realised that if closely adjacent stacks were to become simultaneously involved in fire their total base area would be the effective area for purposes of the Table.

The Fire Service College

00112328

COLLEGE
MARSH
RH

/The

To all Chief Fire Officers

The occasion for giving advice on this matter to planning authorities will normally arise only in respect of proposed new timber sites. In each case it will, no doubt, be possible to strike a reasonable balance between restriction of the useful area of the site and an undue exposure hazard to adjoining property.

In the case of existing sites it is unlikely that the same standards can be achieved, especially as regards clearance distances. In these circumstances the availability of adequate water supplies, the highest standard of housekeeping and the provision of an early alarm of fire will, of course, become correspondingly more important.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'P. J. ...', written over a horizontal line.

Extract from Ministry of Housing and Local Government Circular No. 33/63.

RISK OF FIRE SPREAD FROM STORAGE AREAS

Over the past few years there have been a number of fires in open storages of timber, rubber, waste paper and waste rags. Fires on timber storage sites alone have accounted for over one per cent of all fires attended by fire brigades. In 1959, 108 out of 652 large timber fires spread to other property, in 1960, 84 out of 864, and in 1961 158 out of 894.

In view of the evident danger of spread of fire from such sites, particularly when used for timber storage, local planning authorities are asked when considering applications for the grant of planning permission for new timber and other storages, to take into account, in addition to those factors which normally determine the grant of planning permission, the possible threat which the storage may constitute to surrounding property.

This threat can, of course, be mitigated by maintaining adequate clearance distances between the storage and other property depending on the proposed dimensions of the storage.

On matters of this kind, planning authorities may find it of value to consult the Chief Fire Officer of the appropriate Fire Authority who would be in a position to advise.



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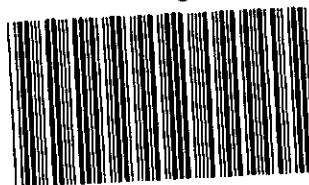
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LIBRARY

The Fire Service
College



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LEGE

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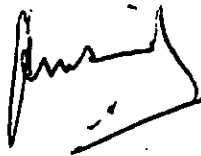
To all Chief Fire Officers

667

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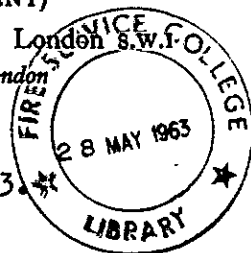
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The Fire Service College

00112330

/The

To all Chief Fire Officers

Will appear later as an article in the I. F. C. quarterly and Wood. - P/A 29 -

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SECRET
NO ONE EVER
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