

Fire and Rescue Intervention Planning - Documentation

CFPA-E Guideline No 50:2026 F





The CFPA Europe develops and publishes common guidelines about fire safety, security, and natural hazards with the aim to achieve similar interpretation and to give examples of acceptable solutions, concepts, and models. The aim is to facilitate and support fire protection, security, and protection against natural hazards across Europe, and the whole world.

Today fire safety, security and protection against natural hazards form an integral part of a modern strategy for survival, sustainability, and competitiveness. Therefore, the market imposes new demands for quality.

These Guidelines are intended for all interested parties and the public. Interested parties include plant owners, insurers, rescue services, consultants, safety companies and the like so that, in the course of their work, they may be able to help manage risk in society.

The Guidelines reflect best practice developed by the national members of CFPA Europe. Where these Guidelines and national requirements conflict, national requirements shall apply.

This Guideline has been compiled by the Fire Safety Commission and is adopted by the members of CFPA Europe.

More information: www.cfpa-e.eu



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Key words: fire safety, fire and rescue service, fire-fighting intervention, documentation

1 INTRODUCTION

2 Purpose

This guideline provides European fire protection associations with standardized criteria for developing operational firefighting documentation (OFD) and tactical plans. These documents enable fire service personnel to effectively manage emergency operations by providing critical information about buildings, facilities, and sites with increased fire risk.

2.1 Background

- Operational firefighting documentation has proven essential for rapid and effective firefighting operations. International experience from Czech Republic (Metodický návod, 1996), Germany (DIN 14095), United Kingdom (BS 9999), United States (NFPA 1620), and other jurisdictions demonstrates that standardized pre-incident planning significantly improves:
 - Response effectiveness and safety
 - Resource allocation and tactical decision-making
 - Protection of life, property, and environment
 - Coordination between facility operators and fire services

3 SCOPE AND APPLICATION

This guideline covers:

- Criteria for determining when operational firefighting documentation is required
- Content and format requirements for different documentation types
- Graphical standards and symbology
- Management, updating, and distribution procedures
- Training requirements for document creation and use

Operational firefighting documentation shall be considered for:

- **Mandatory Application:**
 - Buildings with public assembly occupancy >300 persons
 - Healthcare facilities, educational institutions
 - High-rise buildings (>25m or national threshold)
 - Industrial facilities with significant fire load or hazardous materials
 - Buildings with complex layouts or limited accessibility
 - Heritage/cultural property of significant value
 - Facilities where fire risk assessment identifies specific tactical challenges
- **Voluntary Application:**
 - Any facility owner wishing to enhance emergency preparedness
 - Buildings with moderate fire risk but complex features
 - Facilities with specialized fire protection systems

This guideline does not cover:

- Emergency evacuation plans for building occupants (see ISO 23601)
- Construction site fire safety (see CFPA-E No. 21)
- Wildland fire operations planning

4 DEFINITIONS

Operational Firefighting Documentation (OFD): Standardized information package providing fire service personnel with tactical and strategic information for emergency response operations at a specific facility.

Operational Plan: Comprehensive documentation for facilities with complex tactical challenges, including detailed text, calculations, and multi-page graphical representations.

Tactical Card (Operational Card): Simplified single-page or multi-page format for facilities with less complex tactical challenges.

Fire Risk Assessment: Systematic evaluation of fire hazards, potential consequences, and required protective measures.

Hazardous Materials: Substances exhibiting dangerous properties including explosivity, high flammability, toxicity, corrosiveness, or radioactivity.

Fire Protection Systems: Fixed installations for fire detection, alarm, suppression, or smoke control.

Tactical Challenge: Building feature, process, or condition that complicates firefighting operations beyond standard response capabilities.

5 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Responsibility

The facility owner/operator is responsible for:

- Determining the need for operational firefighting documentation based on fire risk assessment
- Ensuring documentation is prepared by competent persons
- Maintaining documentation accuracy
- Distributing documentation to relevant fire services
- Updating documentation following facility changes

5.2 Competence Requirements

Documentation shall be prepared by individuals with:

- Knowledge of firefighting tactics and operations
- Understanding of building construction and fire behavior
- Familiarity with fire protection systems
- Training in relevant national standards (DIN 14095, NFPA 1620, or equivalent)

5.3 Coordination with Fire Services

Documentation development shall involve:

- Early consultation with local fire authority
- Site familiarization visits for fire service personnel
- Review and approval by fire service before finalization
- Regular joint exercises using the documentation

5.4 Documentation Format and Storage

Physical Format:

- Paper size: A4 portrait or A3 landscape (max width 84cm for large facilities)

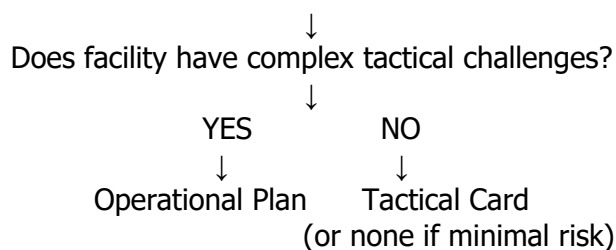
- Weather-resistant material for field use
- High contrast printing for visibility in low light
- Storage in fire control room and fire service dispatch center

Digital Format:

- PDF format for universal compatibility
- Mobile-device accessible versions
- Integration with Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) systems where available
- Secure access controls for sensitive information

6 DOCUMENTATION TYPES AND SELECTION CRITERIA

6.1 Selection Decision Tree



6.2 Standard Tactical Challenges (Tactical Card Sufficient)

- Moderate fire load without special hazards
- Conventional building construction and layout
- Standard fire protection systems
- Limited occupancy (<100 persons typically)
- Accessible from multiple directions

6.3 Complex Tactical Challenges (Operational Plan Required)

- Spatially complex/non-intuitive layouts causing orientation difficulties
- Spaces that cannot be ventilated without technical knowledge
- Restricted access areas requiring special procedures
- Significant quantities of hazardous materials
- Rapid fire spread potential (>2 m/min)
- Critical infrastructure or irreplaceable cultural assets
- Processes requiring specific shutdown procedures
- Special fire protection systems requiring operator knowledge

7 OPERATIONAL PLAN CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

7.1 Structure

An Operational Plan consists of:

A. Basic Document (Retained by facility)

- Operational-tactical study
- Most complex fire scenario analysis
- Force and equipment calculations
- References and methodology

B. Field-Deployable Annexes

- Operational-tactical characteristics (text)
- Site overview plan (graphical)
- Floor plans (graphical)
- Special plans as needed

7.2 Text Component: Operational-Tactical Characteristics

7.2.1 General Facility Information

- Facility name and address
- Primary access points and GPS coordinates
- Responsible persons with 24/7 contact details
- Occupancy type and numbers (day/night/event scenarios)
- Operating hours and special event schedules
- Document version control and update schedule

7.2.2 Building Construction

- Construction type and fire resistance classification
- Load-bearing element fire resistance ratings
- Roof construction and access points
- Fire compartmentation boundaries
- Deviations from building codes
- Structural collapse risk factors

7.2.3 Fire Hazard Analysis

- Fire load density and distribution
- Hazardous material inventory with quantities and locations
- Processes with increased fire risk
- Potential fire spread pathways
- Expected fire development rates

7.2.4 Fire Protection Systems

- Fire detection and alarm system (type, coverage, annunciation)
- Automatic suppression systems (sprinkler, deluge, gas, foam)
- Smoke control systems (HVAC modes, dampers, vents)
- Emergency power and lighting
- Fire service communication systems
- System monitoring and control locations

7.2.5 Water Supply and Fire-Fighting Equipment

- External hydrants (location, flow capacity, pressure)
- Fire department connections
- Internal standpipes and hose stations
- Foam/special agent storage locations
- Fire pump locations and capacities
- Alternative water sources

7.2.6 Access and Circulation

- Primary and secondary apparatus access routes
- Road weight/height/width restrictions
- Staging areas and command post locations
- Internal fire service routes
- Aerial apparatus positioning points
- Obstacles and seasonal access limitations

7.2.7 Tactical Recommendations for Incident Commander

Life Safety Priorities:

- Expected occupant locations and mobility limitations
- Evacuation assembly points
- Rescue access routes and equipment needs
- Time-critical rescue scenarios

Fire Attack Strategy:

- Recommended approach directions and staging
- Fire spread prevention priorities
- Exposure protection requirements
- Special extinguishing agents or tactics
- Hazmat containment and decontamination procedures

Operational Safety:

- Areas requiring breathing apparatus
- Contamination/radioactive zones and exposure limits
- Explosion hazards and safe distances
- Structural collapse indicators
- Required personal protective equipment beyond standard
- Utility shutdown procedures and locations

Resource Requirements:

- Minimum effective response force
- Specialized apparatus needs (HAZMAT, heavy rescue, foam)
- Mutual aid requirements
- Long-duration water supply methods
- External support (utilities, environmental specialists)

7.2.8 Property protection priorities

In facilities containing items of special value, the documentation shall identify salvage and protection priorities. Such as:

- Cultural and Historical Assets
- Critical Equipment and Machinery
- Irreplaceable Items
- Protection Strategies

7.3 Graphical Component: Plans

7.3.1 Site Overview Plan (Scale: 1:500 to 1:2000)

- Mandatory Elements:
- North arrow and scale bar
- Site boundary and property lines
- All buildings (labeled with name, height, number of floors)
- Access roads with names and route numbers
- Fire apparatus staging areas (marked and dimensioned)
- External fire hydrants and water sources with flow rates
- Above/below-ground utility locations (gas, electric, hazmat pipelines)
- Hazardous material storage areas (type and quantity indicated)
- Fire alarm annunciator and key box locations
- Adjacent exposures and their uses
- Topographical features affecting access

Color Coding:

- **Yellow:** Fire apparatus access routes and staging areas
- **Blue:** Water supplies and fire protection equipment
- **Red/Orange:** Hazardous areas and materials
- **Brown:** Combustible structures or fire spread pathways
- **Green:** Vegetation and unimproved areas
- **Black hatching:** No-park zones (exposure hazards)

7.3.2 Floor Plans (Scale: 1:100 to 1:500)

Mandatory Elements:

- Floor designation and level (e.g., "Floor 3/12", "Basement 2")
- North arrow and 10m x 10m reference grid
- Room/area designations with use labels
- Fire compartment boundaries (heavy lines)
- All entry/exit points (primary and emergency)
- Stairwells and elevator locations
- Fire protection system coverage areas:
 - Sprinkler/deluge zones
 - Detection zones
 - Smoke control zones
- Standpipe connections and cabinet locations
- Utility shutdown points (electric, gas, water, process)
- Hazardous material locations with specific identification
- Fire-rated separations and doors
- Explosion relief venting
- Critical structural elements (if damage causes collapse)
- Areas prohibited for water application
- Evacuation assembly areas

Optional Elements (as applicable):

- Process equipment schematics
- HVAC system layouts and damper locations
- Control room/security center locations
- Communication dead zones

- Radiation zones with exposure limits
- Chemical storage with incompatibility warnings

7.3.3 Special Plans (as required)

- Detail plans for complex process areas
- Roof access and photovoltaic installation plans
- Underground utility and drainage plans
- Water supply booster system schematics
- Firefighting water retention systems
- Cultural property protection priorities
- Temporary condition plans (construction, special events)

7.4 Calculations (Basic Document Only)

7.4.1 Design Fire Scenario

- Location and characteristics of most challenging fire scenario
- Assumed fire growth rate and spread pathways
- Time-to-detection and response time assumptions
- Expected fire area at response force arrival

7.4.2 Resource Calculations

- Based on recognized methods (ISO 23932, NFPA hydraulic calculations, national standards):
- Required fire flow (L/min)
- Number and type of hose streams
- Firefighter staffing requirements
- Breathing apparatus duration and relief cycles
- Foam concentrates quantities for required duration
- Specialized equipment needs

7.4.3 Timeline Analysis

- Free-burn period until response
- Initial attack capability vs. fire development
- Reinforcement arrival times
- Estimated fire control time

8 TACTICAL CARD CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

8.1 Format

- Single A4 page (duplex printing) or A3 single sheet
- Text on front, site plan on reverse
- Laminated for durability
- Available in vehicle-mounted quick reference format

8.2 Text Content (Front)

Header Block:

- Facility name, address, GPS coordinates
- Emergency contact, facility representative
- Date prepared, next review date

Facility Overview:

- Occupancy type, maximum occupancy
- Building construction type, number of floors
- Total floor area, roof type

Critical Information:

- Hazardous materials (type, location, quantity)
- Fire protection systems (type, coverage)
- Water supply (hydrant locations, capacities)
- Utility shutdown locations
- Special hazards or tactical considerations

Tactical Priorities:

- Life safety considerations
- Primary access route
- Recommended initial deployment
- Special equipment/agent needs

8.3 Graphical Content (Reverse)

Site Diagram:

- Simplified site layout (not to strict scale)
- Building footprint with entry points marked
- Hydrant locations
- Access route and command post location
- Hazard symbols for major risks
- North arrow
- Symbol Legend
- Key to all symbols used

9 GRAPHICAL STANDARDS AND SYMBOLOGY

9.1 General Principles

- Consistent symbology based on ISO/DIN/national standards
- High contrast colours for visibility
- Symbols sized appropriately for plan scale
- Legend provided on each plan sheet

9.2 Standard Symbols (see Annex A for complete symbol set)

Water Supply:

- Underground hydrant (circle with H)
- Above-ground hydrant (filled circle with H)
- Fire department connection (FDC symbol)

- Standpipe connection (SP symbol)
- Fire pump (P in square)
- Water storage tank (rectangle with capacity)

Hazards:

- General warning (triangle with exclamation)
- Explosion risk (bursting bomb symbol)
- Toxic material (skull symbol per GHS)
- Flammable material (flame symbol)
- Corrosive material (corrosion symbol)
- Radioactive material (radiation trefoil)
- High voltage electrical (lightning bolt with voltage)

Fire Protection:

- Sprinkler coverage (umbrella symbol or shaded area)
- Smoke detector (SD symbol)
- Heat detector (HD symbol)
- Manual alarm station (break glass icon)
- Fire control panel (FCP)
- Fire extinguisher (portable extinguisher icon)

Building Features:

- Fire-rated wall/door (rated separation with time)
- Stairwell (stairs with direction)
- Elevator (square with elevator icon)
- Roof access (ladder symbol)
- Exit route (directional arrow with "EXIT")

Utilities:

- Electric shut-off (lightning bolt in square)
- Gas shut-off (valve symbol with "GAS")
- Water shut-off (valve symbol with "H2O")
- Process shutdown (stop symbol with label)

9.3 Colour Standards

Color	Application
Blue	Water supplies, fire protection equipment, firefighting infrastructure
Red/Orange	Hazards, dangerous materials, prohibited areas
Yellow	Fire service access, staging areas, safe approach routes
Green	Vegetation, safe areas, assembly points
Brown	Combustible construction elements, fire spread pathways
Black	Structural elements, text, general information
Purple	Radiation hazards, contamination zones

9.4 Text Standards

- Sans-serif font for maximum legibility
- Minimum text height: 2.5mm on printed plan
- Room labels: UPPERCASE
- Annotations: Sentence case
- Multilingual labelling where fire services serve diverse populations

9.5 DOCUMENTATION MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

9.6 Version Control

- Each document shall include:
 - Unique document identifier
 - Date of creation
 - Revision number and date
 - Next scheduled review date
 - Approval signatures (facility and fire service)

9.7 Update Triggers

- Documentation must be updated within 30 days when:
 - Building construction or layout changes
 - Occupancy type or hazard classification changes
 - Fire protection system modifications
 - Process or material storage changes

- Access route alterations
- Organizational contact changes

Periodic Review

- Minimum review frequency:
- High-hazard facilities: Annually
- Standard facilities: Every 2 years
- Low-hazard facilities: Every 3 years

Distribution

Minimum Distribution:

- Fire service dispatch/operations center
- On-site in fire control room or key box
- Facility security/management office
- Digital copy to responding fire apparatus (CAD/mobile systems)

Access Control:

- Balance information availability with security concerns
- Redact sensitive commercial information if necessary
- Restrict distribution of critical infrastructure details per national security requirements

Field Validation

- Annual site familiarization training for fire service personnel
- Documented walk-throughs to verify plan accuracy
- Post-incident review to identify documentation improvements

10 IMPLEMENTATION AND TRAINING

10.1 Fire Service Personnel Training

Initial Training:

- Understanding operational firefighting documentation types and uses
- Map reading and symbol interpretation
- Integration into incident command procedures
- Site familiarization protocols

Continuing Education:

- Annual review of updated plans for jurisdiction
- Tabletop exercises using documentation
- Live drills at documented facilities

10.2 Facility Personnel Training

- Cooperation during emergency response
- Providing technical expertise to incident commander
- Facility shutdown procedures
- Coordination points and communication protocols

10.3 Documentation Preparers

- Certification or training programs should include:

- Fire behaviour and building construction
- Fire protection systems technology
- Tactical firefighting operations
- Relevant national standards (DIN 14095, NFPA 1620, etc.)
- CAD and mapping software proficiency
- Communication with fire services

European guidelines

Fire (<https://cfpa-e.eu/category-guidelines/fire-prevention-and-protection/>)

- Guideline No 1 F - Internal fire protection control
- Guideline No 2 F - Panic & emergency exit devices
- Guideline No 3 F - Certification of thermographers
- Guideline No 4 F - Introduction to qualitative fire risk assessment
- Guideline No 5 F - Guidance signs, emergency lighting and general lighting
- Guideline No 6 F - Fire safety in care homes
- Guideline No 7 F - Safety distance between waste containers and buildings
- Guideline No 8 F - withdrawn*
- Guideline No 9 F - Fire safety in restaurants
- Guideline No 10 F - Smoke alarms in the home
- Guideline No 11 F - Recommended numbers of fire protection trained staff
- Guideline No 12 F - Fire safety basics for hot work operatives
- Guideline No 13 F - Fire protection documentation
- Guideline No 14 F - Fire protection in information technology facilities
- Guideline No 15 F - Fire safety in guest harbours and marinas
- Guideline No 16 F - Fire protection in offices
- Guideline No 17 F - Fire safety in farm buildings
- Guideline No 18 F - Fire protection on chemical manufacturing sites
- Guideline No 19 F - Fire safety engineering concerning evacuation from buildings
- Guideline No 20 F - Fire safety in camping sites
- Guideline No 21 F - Fire prevention on construction sites
- Guideline No 22 F - Wind turbines – Fire protection guideline
- Guideline No 23 F - Securing the operational readiness of fire control system
- Guideline No 24 F - Fire safe homes
- Guideline No 25 F - Emergency plan
- Guideline No 26 F - withdrawn*
- Guideline No 27 F - Fire safety in apartment buildings
- Guideline No 28 F - Fire safety in laboratories
- Guideline No 29 F - Protection of paintings: transports, exhibition and storage
- Guideline No 30 F - Managing fire safety in historic buildings
- Guideline No 31 F - Protection against self-ignition and explosions in handling and storage of silage and fodder in farms
- Guideline No 32 F - Treatment and storage of waste and combustible secondary raw materials
- Guideline No 33 F - Evacuation of people with disabilities
- Guideline No 34 F - Fire safety measures with emergency power supply
- Guideline No 35 F - Fire safety in warehouses
- Guideline No 36 F - Fire prevention in large tents
- Guideline No 37 F - Photovoltaic systems: recommendations on loss prevention
- Guideline No 38 F - Fire safety recommendations for short-term rental accommodations
- Guideline No 37 F - Fire protection in schools
- Guideline No 38 F - Fire safety recommendations for short-term rental accommodations
- Guideline No 39 F - Fire protection in schools
- Guideline No 40 F - Procedure to certify CFPA-E Fire Safety Specialists in Building Design
- Guideline No 41 F - Safety instructions for the use and charging of small and medium size lithium ion powered devices
- Guideline No 42 F - Guidance document for Selection of Fire Protection Systems
- Guideline No 43 F - Foam Concentrates - The selection criteria

Guideline No 44 F – Fire safety recommendations for electric vehicles
 Guideline No 45 F – Fire Safety Recommendations for Medium-size Electric Vehicles
 Guideline No 46 F – Fire Safety Recommendations for Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)
 Guideline No 47 F – Transport and storage of batteries
 Guideline No 48 F – Fire Protection in Bus Depots

Natural hazards (<https://cfpa-e.eu/category-guidelines/natural-hazards/>)

Guideline No 1 N - Protection against flood
 Guideline No 2 N - Business resilience – An introduction to protecting your business
 Guideline No 3 N - Protection of buildings against wind damage
 Guideline No 4 N - Lighting protection
 Guideline No 5 N - Managing heavy snow loads on roofs
 Guideline No 6 N - Forest fires
 Guideline No 7 N - Demountable / Mobile flood protection systems
 Guideline No 8 N - Ensuring supplies of firefighting water in extreme weather conditions
 Guideline No 9 N - Protection against hail damage
 Guideline No 10 N - Heavy rain and flash flood; Recommendations on flood prevention and protection

Security (<https://cfpa-e.eu/category-guidelines/security/>)

Guideline No 1 S - Arson document
 Guideline No 2 S - Protection of empty buildings
 Guideline No 3 S - Security systems for empty buildings
 Guideline No 4 S - Guidance on keyholder selections and duties
 Guideline No 5 S - Security guidelines for museums and showrooms
 Guideline No 6 S - Security guidelines emergency exit doors in non-residential premises
 Guideline No 7 S - Developing evacuation and salvage plans for works of art and heritage buildings
 Guideline No 8 S - Security in schools
 Guideline No 9 S - Recommendation for the control of metal theft
 Guideline No 10 S - Protection of business intelligence
 Guideline No 11 S - Cyber security for small and medium-sized enterprises
 Guideline No 12 S - Security Guidelines for Businesses
 Guideline No 13 S - Cybersecurity Basic level – Basic IT security
 Guideline No 14 S - Security Report Rental, Storage and Exhibition of Art Objects

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for writing or drawing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.



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