

# FEMA's Rack Hose Training Website Educates Building Owners and Occupants

BY FRED GOODNIGHT

In 1995, a powerful fire ignited several buildings of New York's old, historic St. George Hotel. When firefighters arrived, they were met with heavy fire on the ninth floor, and they proceeded to hook up to the standpipe fire hose station on the eighth floor. However, their efforts were in vain. Once hooked up, they realized that the station had been vandalized—and not inspected or maintained—and was therefore useless.

This fire situation illustrates that a balanced fire protection plan is only effective if the components of the plan are regularly inspected and maintained, thereby ensuring effectiveness. Unfortunately some of today's building owners still believe that because the proper fire equipment is installed and in place, it will be in operable condition to fight fire whenever it comes their way. However, the reality is that maintenance is a critical component of effective fire protection.

Recognizing a long-time need for more education and training on the proper operation and maintenance of standpipe fire hose stations, the Fire Equipment Manufacturers' Association (FEMA) recently launched a new website, [www.rackhosetraining.com](http://www.rackhosetraining.com).

OSHA requires that building owners provide education and training on fire hose stations if that equipment is to be included in a building's fire protection plan, but FEMA didn't find any training programs that meet those requirements. In response, FEMA created a free, public-service website for anyone hoping to learn how to use this important fire equipment.

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The rack hose training website was created to provide a comprehensive package of hands-on information in an interactive, interesting, and easy-to-use format. It takes visitors through all aspects of operating a fire hose station, including key benefits, the classes of stations, and most importantly, proper use, inspection, and maintenance.

According to Pat Jagustetter, chairman of the interior division of FEMA, “We could all benefit from more education on standpipe fire hose stations and how they are properly operated. Millions of people pass by rack hoses each day in their places of residence or employment and may not fully understand how they should be operated at the time of a fire.”

The cornerstone of the website is an illustrated, playable demonstration of how a rack hose is operated. This component provides step-by-step

instructions and can be found on the “Proper Use” page, along with a segment about conditions that dictate when someone should choose to fight a fire.

The website was created to become an important resource in the industry that will help to better educate others about the importance and effectiveness of standpipe fire hose stations. In addition to reviewing proper operation procedures, the website leads visitors through a brief quiz at the end to put their knowledge to the test. If all the questions are answered correctly, the website will provide a printable completion certificate.

In addition to the sections listed above, [www.rackhosetraining.com](http://www.rackhosetraining.com) offers information about where standpipe fire hose stations are needed, a hose rack assembly diagram, and a checklist for maintaining rack hoses in proper working condition. The website can also be accessed through FEMA's website at [www.femalifesafety.org](http://www.femalifesafety.org).

Founded in 1930, FEMA represents member companies that aim to create top-quality, fire protection products ranging from portable fire extinguishers and fire hose systems to fire suppression systems, interior equipment, and others—all necessary components to a complete and balanced fire protection plan. To order additional educational materials, contact FEMA at (216) 241-7333 or visit [www.femalifesafety.org](http://www.femalifesafety.org). ♦

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