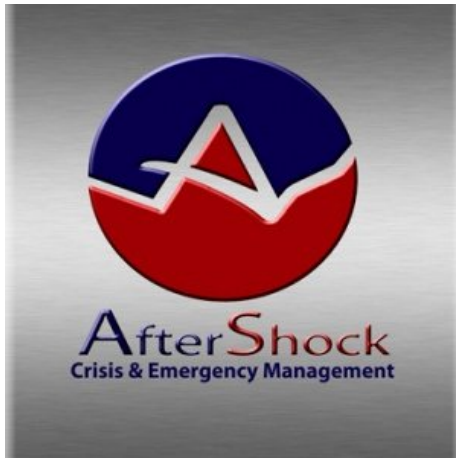


Fires in High Rise Structures - The Bad, The UGLY! (Part One)



"This post is dedicated to all those who dare to run into a burning building while everyone else runs out; and to those who have given their lives while fighting for others to live".

There are no happy endings to a [fire in a high rise](#) structure. Whether an apartment building or a business tower; there are always injuries, extensive property damage and in many cases loss of lives.

What contributes to this is the inaccessibility to such structures! Like previously stated, your [chances of surviving a disaster](#) depends upon your speed and ability to do so and in high rises both these factors are shot down.

Most cases where fires broke out in high rises it has taken an extreme amount of effort as well as time (which no one has at moments of such disasters) to get to the point of origin, fight the fire and save lives by [speedy evacuation](#).

Let's look at some previously published [statistics on 'fires in high rise structures'](#), what they cost both physically AND financially and then talk about what obstacles fire responders face while trying to fight high rise fires and some innovative new technology that can make the process easier!

Statistic # 1:



Each year, an estimated 15,500 high-rise structure fires cause 60 civilian deaths, 930 injuries, and \$252 million in

property loss. High-rise fires are more injurious and cause more damage than all structure fires.

Statistic # 2:

Three-quarters of high-rise fires are in residential structures and cause 25% of the total dollar loss.

Statistic # 3:

The leading cause of all high-rise fires is cooking (38%), but cause patterns vary by specific property type. Sixty-nine percent of high-rise structure fires originate on the

fourth floor or below; 60% occur in apartment buildings; and 43% originate in the kitchen.

Statistic # 4:

Between 2003 and 2006, an average of 13,400 high-rise fires/year took place, according to the NFPA. Those fires led to more than 60 civilian deaths, nearly 500 civilian injuries, and \$179 million in property damage/year.

Statistic # 5:



99% of the world's ladder trucks can't reach above the 7th floor whereas MOST high rises are at-least 12 floors and above.

Whether you work at (a) World Trade Center or live in a posh new high rise right at the beach front, chances are that there will be a fire related incident which could very well turn fatal. If you work or live on or above the fourth floor, this fire related incident could prove to be very bad for you and your family/staff. And now more than ever with [man-made disasters](#) such as bombings and arson taking a never before seen rise, these chances have been multiplied, exponentially!

Most of us have seen gory images of people trying to run away from a fire while being trapped inside of a burning high rise, having no option but to jump out of a building. As sad and tragic as it may seem, most people would prefer to jump rather than burn! It would be nice if more people were prepared, equipped and knew EXACTLY what to do and how to do it if this were to happen in the high rise they reside or work in.

Here is some advice that [Ryan Alles](#); a colleague in the emergency field, a friend and more than that, a concerned parent and team leader has to say about what we can do to prevent such fires and when time comes, improve our chances of survival!



Ryan has spent over a decade in the United States serving in the emergency services field as both an [EMT](#) and a professional fire fighter. Frustrated and angered by the events of September 11 2001, which proved how slow evacuations from high rise structures can have fatal consequences, he worked to make self-evacuation solutions available for the average citizen and thus, [High Rise Escape Systems \(HRES\)](#) was formed of which Ryan is the president of.

In 2007 Ryan was appointed to the [National Fire Protection Association \(NFPA\)](#) Building Code/Safety to Life Technical Committee and serves as a Subject Matter Expert (SME) on Supplemental Evacuation. He is a founding member of the Safe Evacuation Coalition, participating member on the [American Society of Testing and Material \(ASTM\)](#) E06.77 committee on Supplemental Evacuation Devices, member of the [International Counter-Terrorism Officers Association](#) and worked with Homeland Security to designate High Rise Escape Systems product line as a "Qualified Anti-Terrorism Technology" under the [SAFETY Act](#).

Most recently Ryan was honored with the [2009 Homeland Security Award](#) for “Best Clean Up, Decontamination, Disaster Preparedness or Recovery Product” by Government Security News and was a finalist in the 2010 ceremony. He has seen firsthand the benefits of [planning ahead for emergencies](#), and the consequences of failing to.

Ryan Alles:

Fire safety in multi-story buildings is something that we are all responsible for yet so many people take for granted. Individual’s throughout the building carry out their daily lives without thinking their actions might affect others. It’s like practicing safe driving on a major highway, until someone decides to read a text message from the car next to you and ends up swerving into your lane. Suddenly a chain reaction is initiated and MANY BECOME AFFECTED!



Common sense is not so common, combine that with the lack of know-how and you're cooking up a perfect recipe for a disaster!

So regardless of how well WE practice [fire safety](#), we are counting on those that live above and below us to be doing the same.

99% of the world’s ladder trucks can’t reach above the 7th floor and Khan from

[AfterShock-CEM](#) pointed out a sobering statistic that sixty-nine percent of high-rise structure fires originate on the fourth floor or below so one can easily understand why your risk is multiplied exponentially each floor you go up.

We don't like to offer criticism without offering solutions but completely believe that the majority of those living or working at heights truly believe that the Fire Department will come and save them. In reality, the brave Fire Fighters are the only ones trained to put out the fire BUT when lives are at stage and getting to such heights nearly impossible, rescue takes precedence (because people didn't "plan two ways out") and the fire is left to double at an approximate rate of every minute!



Dwight D. Eisenhower once said “A plan is nothing. Planning is everything.” [Prevention](#) is so important but we understand that unfortunately time and time again s**t happens, and that’s where [crisis and emergency management](#) becomes important.

[HRES](#) provides [permanent and portable self-evacuation systems](#) designed with the elderly and disabled in mind and resilient enough to be used by families, first responders and the military.

To find out more information on these systems [visit our website](#) so that we can give your contingency plans another more effective “Plan B”!

Let's stop right here before we lose your attention. For the second part of this post, **visit us on Friday to find out some of Ryan's fire safety tips** that we would like to share with you to make you better prepared!

Stay Well - Stay SAFE!

N Khan
Founder | Chief Consultant
[AfterShock-CEM](#)

With special thanks to:

Ryan Alles
President
[High Rise Escape Systems Inc.](#)