**NEWS ARTICLE**

Stop your infrastructure project going up in flames by incorporating fire safety in the design phase

**28 November 2022:** It is critical to incorporate fire-safety planning during the inception phase of an infrastructure project so that important design aspects such as escape paths and the structural stability of any buildings can be established prior to critical design elements being locked in. Additional factors such as the intended use of the buildings and the resultant fire load and associated fire risks must be considered, highlights [ASP Fire](http://www.aspfire.co.za) CEO **Michael van Niekerk**.

For example, these include automatic sprinkler protection. Regulatory fire-safety requirements such as fire detection, smoke control ventilation, fire extinguishers, fire hose reels and fire hydrants, together with on-site stored water supplies, must be included in the early design phase.

Meanwhile, the post-construction phase of any infrastructure project must focus on training, inspection, testing and maintenance of all fire-safety equipment, from sprinklers and fire alarm systems to fire hose reels, extinguishers and fire hydrants.

“Leaving the fire-safety design of a building to the end of the construction phase results in a sub-optimal design that requires a great deal more funding and effort to implement effectively,” warns van Niekerk.

The construction phase of a building project is characterised by higher risks related to hot works that are not protected by fire equipment as it is not functional at this stage. This also applies to building refurbishment or upgrade projects.

A strong focus on ongoing training, inspection, testing and maintenance of all fire equipment must be in place to ensure that life-safety systems are fully operational at all times and that trained personnel are able to carry out First Aid firefighting before trained fire department professionals arrive on the scene and are able to intervene.

Buildings represent high-value assets that house large personnel populations, expensive equipment or critical services. The fire protection of these assets, people, equipment and services must be achieved at the lowest possible cost, while attaining the highest level of fire protection. “It is only by engaging the services of professional fire engineers at the concept development stage of a project that one is able to attain balance cost and benefit,” concludes van Niekerk.

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**Notes to the Editor**
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**About ASP Fire**
ASP Fire operates across the entire African continent from its Gauteng base, providing professional, accredited fire risk management and support to its clients. ASP Fire designs, installs and maintains a full range of fire detection and suppression equipment suited to clients’ needs. ASP Fire provides a holistic, proactive and preventative fire solution based on integrated fire risk assessment, training and consulting, with the installation and maintenance of fire detection and suppression systems that meet SABS, NFPA, FPASA, FDIA and SAQCC standards.

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