

FIRE FIGHTERS GUIDANCE NOTE # 1-5

ISSUE: LIFE SAFETY ROPE AND EQUIPMENT

Fire departments that use life safety ropes / equipment should establish and maintain a comprehensive life safety rope / equipment inspection, retirement, replacement and record keeping program.

Record keeping should include a complete history of all life safety ropes and related equipment.

Manufacturers of life safety rope are required to provide information for the fire department to consider prior to reusing life safety rope. Manufacturer's directions should be followed when inspecting, testing and maintaining all life safety ropes and related equipment.

At a minimum, the following criteria should be met before reusing life safety rope:

- Rope has not been visually damaged;
- Rope has not been exposed to heat, direct flame impingement, or abrasion;
- Rope has not been subjected to any impact load;
- Rope has not been exposed to liquids, solids, gases, mists, or vapors of any chemical or other material that can deteriorate rope;
- Rope passes inspection when inspected by a qualified person following the manufacturer's inspection procedures both before and after each use.

If any life safety rope does not meet all of the above conditions, it should be immediately removed from service as a life safety rope. If there is any doubt about serviceability of a rope, remove it from service and do not use it for life safety activities.

Fire departments should establish life safety rope / equipment retirement policies in accordance with manufacturer's service life recommendations.

When acquiring new life safety ropes or related equipment, fire departments should ensure that the equipment has been properly tested and certified for life safety purposes by a qualified agency. Examples of suitable standards include:

- NFPA 1983 – Standard on Life Safety Rope and Equipment for Emergency Services
- ULC S555 – Standard for Fire and Emergency Service Technical Rescue Ropes and Water Rescue Throw Ropes and Associated Equipment