MEETING MINUTES
High Rise Building Safety Advisory Committee

Teleconference/Web Meeting
October 9, 2014

1. **Call to Order.** The meeting was called to order by Chair, Jim Quiter, at 1:00 pm EDT on Thursday, October 9, 2014.

2. **Introduction of Attendees.**

The following members participated in the teleconference:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>REPRESENTING</th>
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<tr>
<td>James R. Quiter, Chair</td>
<td>Arup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristin Bigda, Staff Liaison</td>
<td>NFPA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geoff Craighead, Principal</td>
<td>Universal Protection Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>John P. Miller, Principal</td>
<td>Los Angeles City Fire Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jake Pauls, Principal</td>
<td>Jake Pauls Consulting Services – Rep. American Public Health Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>James P. Shea, Principal</td>
<td>Brookfield Multiplex Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William A. Stewart, Principal</td>
<td>Metropolitan Fire Chiefs- IAFC/NFPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles R. Jennings, Alternate to S. Regenhard</td>
<td>John Jay College of Criminal Justice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The following guest participated in the teleconference:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>REPRESENTING</th>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Solomon, NFPA Staff</td>
<td>NFPA</td>
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The following members did not participate in the teleconference:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>REPRESENTING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jack J. Murphy, Principal</td>
<td>Fire Safety Directors Association of Greater New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally Regenhard, Principal</td>
<td>The Skyscraper Safety Campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Alternate attended)</td>
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3. **Review of Agenda.**

4. **Approval of Minutes.** The minutes of the 2014 May 13-14 meeting were approved with no modifications.

5. **Status of NFPA 1/101/5000 and next revision schedule.** NFPA 1/101/5000 have completed their revision cycle and the 2015 editions of the documents have been issued. Language regarding video monitoring of stairs in high-rise buildings was included. The public input closing date for the next cycle will be sometime next spring. The committee is encouraged to think of any high-rise related issues they would like to pursue next cycle.

6. **Residential EAP Guide.** J. Murphy is working on the draft of the guide and it will be distributed to the committee for review when it is ready. The plan is to discuss the guide at the next meeting.

7. **Update on standard for professional practices for facility fire safety planning and fire safety directors.** C. Jennings and J. Murphy volunteered to be a part of the Standards Council task group related to the new proposed document on professional practices for facility fire safety planning and fire safety directors.

8. **Future HRBSAC Action Items and Updates.**
   a. **Helipad provisions in CA** – *see Minutes Attachment A*
   b. **Office EAP Guide** – K.Bigda will work with NFPA staff to contact the fire chief organizations and communicate about the EAP Guide for office buildings. K.Bigda will add a link to [www.nfpa.org/highrise](http://www.nfpa.org/highrise) to allow for the public to submit comments and feedback about the guide. A short presentation was developed for all committee members to use to communicate the guide. *See Minutes Attachment B*
   c. **Elevators for Occupant Evacuation** – The committee continues to express interest in further research into the use of elevators for occupant evacuation. Future issues related to elevators include where and how are they used and elevator messaging strategies. The committee’s next steps
related to this topic will be addressed at the Spring/Summer meeting in 2015.

d. **Resiliency** - NFPA continues its strategic initiative to research the concept of resiliency and incorporating it into NFPA codes and standards.

e. **Phased Occupancy During Construction** – the committee will be further addressing this issue as a potential action item at the spring/summer 2015 in-person meeting.

f. **CTBUH Meeting** – The following is a link to the in-progress CTBUH webpage calling for papers for next year’s conference in NYC, scheduled for some time in October. The deadline for abstracts is now January 30, 2015. CTBUH will be posting more details on submission procedures shortly. [www.ctbuh2015.com](http://www.ctbuh2015.com)

9. **Next Meeting.** The next meeting of the committee will be a teleconference/web meeting sometime in March 2015. The purpose of this meeting will be to review the residential EAP guide, develop public inputs for NFPA 1/101/5000 and to prepare for the spring/summer 2015 in-person meeting.

10. **Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned by Chair Quiter at 3:00pm EDT on Thursday, October 9, 2014.

**Meeting Minutes Prepared By:**

Kristin Bigda, NFPA Staff
Op-Ed Maybe L.A.'s 'stupid' helipad rule wasn't so dumb

RESCUED PERSONNEL using helicopters plucked five people from the roof of the burning First Interstate Bank Building in downtown Los Angeles in 1988. (Los Angeles Times)

By PATRICK BUTLER

October 6, 2014, 5:31 PM

With the swipe of a pen last week, Mayor Eric Garcetti eliminated what he called "one more stupid rule in Los Angeles." But as a career firefighter, I have to ask: Was the law really so stupid? And what process led to its elimination?

Before the mayor's action, developers were required to include rooftop helipads when building skyscrapers. The law, enacted in 1974 after two deadly skyscraper fires in Brazil, was intended to save lives. In 1988 it did just that, when five people were rescued by helicopters from the top of the burning First Interstate Bank Building.

And it's not only in Los Angeles that helipads have saved lives during fires. During the devastating 1980 MGM Grand Hotel fire in Nevada, more than 1,000 people were taken from the roof of the hotel by military helicopters, which made trip after trip to rescue victims. That same year in Puerto
Rico, six helicopters flew rescue missions to save people on the rooftop of the burning Dupont Plaza Hotel.

Firefighters in Los Angeles operate under increasingly difficult conditions. Recent cost-cutting by city leaders has caused the Fire Department to eliminate 318 firefighters and paramedics from its workforce and has led to a reduction in firetrucks and ambulances at 22 neighborhood fire stations. The loss of resources, coupled with a growing demand for service, have led to increased response times and a department desperately trying to do more with less.

Still, one great strength of the Los Angeles Fire Department is its aviation unit, which is one of the best in the nation. The department’s pilots operate a fleet of six specialized helicopters, and they are trained in all aspects of fire and rescue operations, including advanced use of night-vision goggles. Current protocols require helicopters to respond to all reported high-rise fires with a crew of firefighters on board. And rooftop access via helicopter can enable firefighters to get more quickly to top floors during skyscraper fires.

The faster firefighters can get to where a fire is burning in a high-rise, the faster they can control and contain it, stopping it from spreading through the building and saving lives. Relying on internal elevators or on climbing hundreds of flights of stairs is certainly one option, but why limit our abilities?

After the Sept. 11 attacks, the Fire Department adopted new procedures and conducted evacuation drills in Los Angeles. Fire and police helicopters practiced simulated aerial evacuations from helipads atop downtown buildings. The drills demonstrated that the city’s fleet of helicopters could evacuate as many as 300 people an hour. This could help in terrorism situations or when an active shooter is loose in a building.

Los Angeles has one of the strictest fire and building codes in the country, and it has served us well in good times and in bad times. Much of the fire code was developed as the result of tragic outcomes — the "catastrophic theory of reform."

Critics of L.A.’s helipad law say it has led to an uninteresting skyline in the city, since skyscrapers are required to have large flat surfaces on top. They also say the law isn’t necessary because technology such as dedicated fire elevators can accomplish the same goals. But technology can fail, and there are buildings in Los Angeles, including the JW Marriott building, that both add to an interesting skyline and have helipads.

But the law was scrapped by mayoral fiat after what this paper described as a "working group convened by the mayor" concluded it was unnecessary. Wouldn’t it have been better to have a full and open public discussion on the subject? Moreover, we haven’t seen the city moving to require
these other protections that critics say make the helipad law obsolete.

Safety laws tend to get passed in the wake of disasters. I hope it won't take one to get city officials to examine the wisdom of changing the helipad law without thoroughly examining whether that's a wise idea — and considering whether other laws are needed in its wake.

I have only two goals in raising this issue: I want firefighters and the public to have their best chance to survive a high-rise fire, and I want an open process when decisions are made that could affect that chance. In my 24 years with the department, I've seen over and over the ills of political meddling in departmental operations. I've seen the revolving door of fire chiefs, with six chiefs in just seven years. And this feels like yet more meddling. I worry that the mayor's elimination of that "stupid rule" last week might make our job more difficult — and the public less safe.

Patrick Butler is an assistant chief in the Los Angeles Fire Department.

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Guidelines for Developing Emergency Action Plans for All-Hazard Emergencies in High-Rise Office Buildings

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www.nfpa.org/highrise
What

- Developed by NFPA’s High Rise Building Safety Advisory Committee.
- Developed in response to the need for guidance in preparing staff and occupants of high-rise buildings for evacuation.
- Assist in the orderly evacuation of people and in the management of the incident.
- Cannot completely protect against certain extraordinary events.
- Provides guidance for those parties responsible for executing the evacuation and information on various evacuation strategies that should be considered.
- Applicable to both fire and all-hazard emergencies including human-made and natural disasters.
- Addresses criteria and information necessary to integrate proper evacuation components into a comprehensive evacuation planning strategy.
How

• Every owner, manager, and tenant of a high-rise building should, in cooperation with the AHJ, establish, implement, maintain, and update an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for the building.

• EAP describes the procedures that occupants should follow in an emergency situation, evacuation, or drill, including total-building evacuation.

• Description of roles and duties of the designated personnel (Fire and Life Safety Director(s), Deputy Fire and Life Safety Directors, Floor Wardens, Deputy Floor Wardens.)

• Responsibilities of building occupants, employers, and AHJs.

• Suggested responses to all-hazard building emergencies.

• Occupant Evacuation Strategies.

• Behaviors, communication, and informational cues of occupants during an evacuation.

• Recommended procedures for drills, exercises and occupant education.

• When and how to update the EAP.
• The guide and additional high-rise building safety resources are available at www.nfpa.org/highrise

• Follow the work of the High-Rise Building Safety Advisory Committee at www.nfpa.org/highrisecom

• Guide is free and available for download in electronic pdf format.

• Spread the word!