

**Travis County Emergency Services District No. 9**  
**Westlake Fire Department**

**Standard Operating Procedure**

**Subject: Sprinklered Buildings and Private Fire Protection Systems**

**Effective Date: June 15, 1997**

**Authorized By: Chief Paul Barker Date: May 11, 2000**

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**I. Purpose**

To establish a policy for fireground operations involving buildings containing automatic sprinkler systems and fire pumps.

**II. Policy**

- A. All Department members shall be familiar with the function and operation of automatic sprinkler systems.
- B. Once an automatic sprinkler system has activated, the supply of water to the sprinkler system shall not be turned off until the source of the activation has been identified and the situation rendered safe.

**III. Procedure\_**

- A. Fire pump and sprinkler system readiness should be visually checked any time the presence of significant fire is established in a high-rise building.
- B. When there is a fire in a building containing an automatic sprinkler system, the Department may need to supplement the water system pressure in the building. When supplying water to a sprinklered building, a minimum of two supply lines should be connected to the fire department connection. The pressure supplied to the sprinkler shall be a minimum of 100 PSI. This pressure can be increased up to 150 PSI if tactical operations are not affected by the sprinkler system's operation, and/or there are more than 15 sprinklers open.
- C. Sprinkler systems shall be shut down only on the authority of the IC, and only after the fire has been extinguished.
- D. At any fire in a building equipped with a fire pump (normally high-rise buildings) or a sprinkler system, the IC should dispatch a team of at least two firefighters to locate the main valve, and make sure it is in the "open" position. Often the main controls and valves for these fire protection features are located in a common area, either in a basement or a mechanical room. If the valve is closed, it should be fully opened unless the system has a sign stating it is out of service. In any event of valve closure, the IC shall be notified.

- E. If sprinklers are operating in a building containing a fire pump, the team assigned to check the control valve shall check to ensure the fire pump is running. If the pump is not operating and sprinklers are flowing water, the pump should be started through either the emergency start switch on the fire pump controller or by placing the pump controller lever in the "MANUAL" position.
- F. If the pump does not start, notify the IC. The Engine Company supporting the sprinkler system should deliver the same pressure that the pump is designed to deliver. To determine this pressure, a firefighter should check the pump nameplate for its rated pressure.
- G. Sprinkler systems shall not be shut down so as to improve the interior visibility or to aid in ventilation. Many fires have redeveloped and overpowered the sprinkler system because the control valve was closed too early.
- H. In high-rise buildings, each floor has a sectional control valve which controls the sprinkler system for that particular floor. The sectional control valve should be used to control the sprinkler system for each floor. The main control valve should not be used unless the sectional control valve is not functional.
- I. When an inspection reveals a system shut down due to pipe breakage or other conditions, the Chief should be notified of the conditions found and the expected time for the system to remain out-of service. The Chief will monitor the efforts of the building owners to ensure the system is placed back into service within a reasonable time.
- J. When information is received by Communications concerning a sprinkler system being out of service, the Chief and/or Loss Prevention Officer shall be notified. The information should include the name and firm of the individual placing the system out of service, reason for removing the sprinkler from service, and the anticipated down time. Communications shall announce to all stations that the sprinkler system at the affected building is out of service for the anticipated period. The Loss Prevention Officer will ensure that proper maintenance and repairs have been completed on the sprinkler system. The property owner/manager shall notify the Loss Prevention Officer once the system is returned to service. The Loss Prevention Officer will then notify the Chief and all stations.