



East Madison Fire Territory

207 E Main Street
Chesterfield, IN 46017

(765) 378-7255 Administration Line



J. Burrows, Fire Chief

J. Hendrick, Deputy Chief

J. Moore Sr. EMS Chief

Pre-Fire Plan Q&A

What are pre-fire plans?

Pre-fire planning is a joint venture between the fire department and the occupants/owners of the property. Pre-fire planning can provide valuable information which can improve the ability of firefighters to respond effectively to a fire or other emergency. Pre-fire planning can make the difference between minimal and major damage. We know that in an emergency, every second counts, and everything from training to knowing the best route to the scene of a fire can save precious seconds, which can mean saving life, limb, and property. The plan addresses vital fire protection concerns, such as: building layout, access, contents, construction details, types and locations of built-in fire protection devices. It includes all data which can have an impact on decisions or actions taken during an emergency. Pre-fire plans also will be vital in the safety/rescue of a firefighter should he/she have an emergency during the incident.

How can I request a pre-fire plan?

Pre-fire plans are intended for commercial, industrial, or high occupancy / hazard buildings. If you would like the East Madison Fire Territory to consider completing a Pre-fire plan at your property, or you have made changes to your property since our last visit, which may impact an emergency response, please contact our department via email at pio@eastmadisonfire.com.

How often will my building be reviewed?

Generally, each business will be visited twice per year. The first visit will be a “pre-plan” and the second visit will be a “fire inspection” visit. Additional visits could be warranted if there is a significant change to the building, its habitant or if violations are noted during the fire inspection.

We recently had renovations / construction done on-site; do I need a new plan?

Yes, please notify EMFT if any construction has occurred. The local building code officials generally do NOT notify EMFT of any changes to the site.

What is the difference in a fire inspection visit versus a fire pre-plan visit?

A fire inspection and a fire pre-plan visit serve distinct purposes, although both are conducted by the fire department to enhance safety. A fire inspection is a mandatory assessment aimed at ensuring compliance with fire and life safety codes enforced by the local authority having jurisdiction. These inspections are conducted annually or more frequently for high-risk or hazardous properties, such as industrial facilities or venues with large gatherings. During an inspection, the fire department evaluates critical safety measures like fire alarm and sprinkler systems, fire extinguishers, and exit access.

In contrast, a fire pre-plan visit is a proactive measure designed to improve emergency response readiness. Firefighters use these visits to gather crucial information about a property, including its layout, access points, fire protection systems, and any potential hazards. This data is used to create a pre-plan document that guides fire crews during emergencies. Pre-plan visits, typically scheduled in coordination with property



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managers, focus on preparedness rather than compliance and are invaluable for effective emergency operations. While fire inspections help prevent incidents by enforcing safety standards, pre-plan visits ensure responders are well-prepared to handle emergencies quickly and efficiently. Both processes are essential to protecting lives and property within the community.

Are fire/building code officials doing the pre-fire plan?

NO. Members of the EMFT developing the Pre-fire Plan documents are not code or building officials. The EMFT representative is a firefighter. The sole purpose of the site visit is to gather information to develop the plan for firefighting. EMFT will NOT communicate with local code enforcement regarding our site pre-fire planning visit findings unless a serious code violation is noted, or a life safety issue is discovered.

How much will the pre-fire plan visit cost the building owner?

No charge nor any fees are incurred for the EMFT pre-plan visit.

Will I receive a copy of the plan?

A copy of the Pre-fire Plan will not be distributed to the public or to the business. The information is considered proprietary information for the EMFT.

What does the pre-fire plan include?

The information included is based on each occupancy and its unique hazards. They include the following (and perhaps more as needed to help fire command officers understand the facility/site):

- Company/Business name, address, and driving directions
- Occupancy Classifications (such as property use, i.e. residential, commercial, etc.)
- Access Code for gates/doors, Knox Box location ([click for more information on our Knox Box program](#))
- Aerial photos of the site
- Number of stories, building length and width, site plan, floor plans
- Building construction and materials
- Hazardous materials/chemicals present and storage location
- Water supply information
- Defensible space around the building, including turn-around capability
- Location of both fire alarm systems and fire protection systems (sprinklers, etc.)

Where will the EMFT need to visit during the pre-fire plan?

We will need access to the entire building/site, including but not limited to, the basement, storage areas, utilities, roof if easily accessible, fire protection equipment, hazardous materials storage, etc.

How long will the site visit take?



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The visit will generally take an hour, however, could take longer depending on the size of the facility, number of buildings on site, complexity of the operations etc. Providing requested information prior to the visit will reduce the time needed on site.

What information will EMFT need from the building owner?

The basic information in the following PDF **MAY** be needed depending on the occupancy and hazards. Providing much of the information before the site visit will help prepare for the visit and will save time during the visit. The information can be sent electronically or picked up prior and/or during the visit.

Will the pre-fire plan site visit include photos?

The EMFT representative will take photos both inside and outside of the building. The purpose of the photos is to document the facility to familiarize our firefighters with the site. Not all photos taken will be used in the Pre-fire Plan. Site management should advise EMFT of sensitive areas that should not be included in the pre-fire planning document.

Where is the pre-fire planning information stored?

Each fire department apparatus and command vehicles have a laptop computer. The Pre-fire Plan data is accessible via the laptop computer.

Who can I contact with additional questions?

Contact Todd Harmeson, Director of Public Affairs and Outreach at tharmeson@eastmadisonfire.com for any questions regarding the Pre-fire Planning process.



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Finished pre-fire plan document examples

