Fire safety experts

The MSB (Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency) is the competent authority for, among other things, fire safety. The MSB carries on normative work by virtue of the Civil Protection Act (SFS 2003:778). This normative work entails producing instructions and guidance both for individuals and other authorities. The Civil Protection Act stipulates that: The owner or usufructuary of a building or other structure shall to a reasonable degree provide equipment for fire extinguishing and for lifesaving during fires or other emergencies, and generally take the measures required to prevent fires and limit their consequences.

The MSB also deals with chimney sweeping matters and issues regulations for chimney sweeping and how often it should occur. Among other responsibilities, the MSB has issued instructions and guidance on: chimney sweeping, written records of fire safety measures, smoke detectors in homes, and systematic fire safety.

The MSB works to increase fire safety in the community. This is achieved, for example, by jointly with other authorities and organisations strengthening the individual’s ability to prevent and protect one’s self from fires. Additionally, municipal capacities are strengthened through the development of methods, support and guidance for the supervisions that occur in the form of fire safety inspections, i.e. inspections to ensure that an owner/usufructuary has taken reasonable measures to prevent fires.

The MSB works with the entire emergency cycle, in other words, before, during and after the occurrence of emergencies, crises and disasters, which provides good opportunities to adopt a holistic perspective and to gain experience from incidents. Regardless of whether it is one person that is affected, for example, in an accident in the home, or if it is a serious emergency that could have consequences for the entire country or even other countries as well.

Research has been conducted on evacuating, and on the assessment of risks at different sites e.g. care facilities. After the occurrence of fires there are developments in fire prevention work, fire safety inspection work and in lessons learned. Specific work is dedicated to the systematic recording of fatal fires. Work on goals and cost-benefit studies contribute to a better foundation for decisions and recommendations. Through various efforts the knowledge of fire service personnel is broadened so that more of them can work with fire prevention. Observations from R & D are the input values for normative work, guidance and training.

The collation of data on fires and their analysis aims to increase knowledge and insight about fires. Particular importance is placed on the study of the progress of fires, mapping, analysis, and suggesting measures with regard to fatal fires, chimney/flue related fires, and certain others. This work is nationwide and involves about 40 local fire brigades. Fire investigations provide better knowledge about fires and their causes; and draw attention to dangerous or faulty products.

The objective of the Swedish Civil Contingency Agency (MSB) is to strengthen society’s ability to prevent and handle accidents and severe peacetime emergencies. Society can learn from past experience by evaluation and follow-up in a continuous process where experience is being used to organise and develop tasks for the actors in the civil emergency planning system. Evaluation and learning from accidents and disasters, supervision and monitoring, need for new research and support for civil emergency planning activities are important tasks in order to strengthen societal security and to support prevention, preparedness, response and recovery throughout the disaster management cycle.