

Fire and Water: Why Annual Pump Tests Can Save Lives

By Jeffrey Zuk

WATER. What a curious liquid it is. We take it for granted by flushing it down our toilets, spraying it on our lawns, letting it run out of hoses while we soap up our cars, drinking half of a glass then dumping the rest down the drain.

Yet, a bottle of water will fetch a higher price than a soft drink. Whether we value it or waste it, we cannot deny the fact that water is one of the most important elements of our lives.

Now, try to imagine facing an inferno in your home, work place, restaurant or hotel. The heat is scorching, the smoke stifling. What is the one element that can swing the balance to life and blessed deliverance? **WATER.**

We are all partners in making sure that such an important resource available when needed to suppress a fire. How do we do this? Obviously, the pipe and sprinkler systems are the conduit. If the pressure is adequate, all should be well for those in dire need. What if the pressure is not there?

If a fire pump is key to supply water at the pressure required, it becomes the most crucial part of keeping the balance of life in favor of the victims.

I mentioned earlier that we are all partners. By we, I include the contractors who install and maintain fire suppression systems, fire prevention bureaus that oversee the contractors and systems, testing contractors who have the sacred duty of insuring the depend-ability of various parts of a fire pump installation, building owners and managers who hold the trust of those occupying the buildings to make sure all diligence is practiced in seeking compliance with all codes, and village planning commissions to make sure they can supply the needed water to support those life safety systems.

Some may view annual fire pump tests as an inconvenience. Contractors struggle to get dates from fire prevention bureaus. Fire prevention bureaus struggle to cover the tests with limited manpower. Building owners hate to deal with the commotion and expense of something that seems so useless. City officials do not like the burden a fire pump test places on their water and sewer systems. The police don't like the impact to traffic flow.

Unless, of course, there is a fire. Then it's worth the effort. How much more valuable when we are the ones being saved by that deluge of water that extinguishes the fire. How thankful the various "WE" are when the fire becomes personal.

MAKE THE FIRE PERSONAL. If you are part of the process of saving lives by verification of fire pump systems, contribute your best cooperation and your best skills to place your personal stamp of approval on every element you touch. Do not become a stumbling block to getting **WATER** to those who need it. Every fire pump protects someone. Everyone deserves to be given **WATER** when they need it. In order to do that, every fire pump must be tested every year.