

inFIRE

Karlstad, Tuesday June 20, 2006 Notes by Gwen Schagrin

Visit to Karlstad Fire Brigade. Talk by Patrik Håkansson

Command center – emergency services switchboard – only 15 in Sweden

Fire Protection Engineers/ Master of Risk Management

4.5 years of study, only 30-40 educated per year

At Lund University (now also in N. Sweden)

Karlstad region: 5 parts (pre 1999 were separate). Now one fire chief

Every municipality has its own fire/rescue service

Karlstad has 9 on duty per shift. 4 different shifts

Smaller stations

Firefighters might have another job like carpenter but must get to station, change and go within 5 minutes. They are not volunteers, but are part time.

Shift is a week at a time (is this for big stations like Karlstad or the smaller stations???) and they are paid to come in and do sign a contract.

Karlstad region is 85 km across and the major road to Stockholm runs through it and there are many road accidents.

There is a battalion chief in the large Karlstad station; otherwise the other has crew commanders.

There are no part-time firefighters in the Karlstad station.

There are about 20 female firefighters in Sweden

Shift: 8 a.m. to 1800 (6 p.m.) and 1800 to 8 a.m. 28 days. 7 day shifts and 7 night shifts. If you work a Saturday, you work almost 24 hours.

Problem in Sweden: hard to recruit people who work and live nearby and people who work and live in the same town to be part time firefighters.

There are also agreements with industry.

There are a few firefighters who are fulltime in the city where they work and part time in the area where they live.

Lake Vänern in the Karlstad region (it is the biggest lake in Sweden and in Europe except for Russia). The fire service is involved in rescues if they are close to land on the water but the coast guard does the rest and uses helicopters.

They also deal with lots of flooding problems.

Alarms in Karlstad area in 2005

1432 total (of these 835 were Karlstad itself and areas it backs up, 205 were Forshaga, and others in Kil and Grums)

Types of Alarms in 2005

142 fire in building (small or large)

188 fire not in building (e.g. forest)

201 traffic accident

385 detector from fire alarm not fire (accidental triggering of alarm and false alarm)

31 chemical hazards

10 drowning alarm

225 IVPA (firefighters trained as paramedics/ 1st responders; they are the only ambulance service in Karlstad)

250 other (e.g. elevator, cats)

Standby commander is a fire protection engineer, strategic issues, rescue placement issues and is also like a deputy for fire chief

Fire Prevention

4 fire protection engineers and the Fire Chief is one also and one fire inspector

Owner, not the fire dept., is responsible for fire prevention, systematic fire protection management fire extinguishers, sprinklers (cf environmental quality standards)

Fire department does the inspections and wants to see documentation that the owner has checked extinguishers, etc.

Plan process. General plan, about every 10 years. Zoning. Detailed plan for site (e.g. house 3 floors high) Fire dept looks at access to site, whether enough water, risk issues such as chemical hazards on roads by people's residences.

BLEVE: calculate radius of explosion for a plant with LP that wants to expand.

On master plans, city decides. Fire Dept. only advises.

Building codes; prescriptive design (follow detailed rules, fire rated walls, etc.) vs. analytic design (performance based requirements – verify installed sprinkler system instead of safety layer on a wall - verify that the installation is as good as the prescriptive or better). Fire consultant is usually a fire protection engineer.

Gothenberg Disco: no sprinklers, no exit signs, locked doors, chair blocking.