



Recommendations for rescue services – short version

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Joel Kauppinen

joel.kauppinen@sppl.fi

Adapting Arctic Fire and Rescue Services to the Impacts of Climate Change -project



THE FINNISH ASSOCIATION
OF FIRE OFFICERS



Ministry of the Interior
Finland



Ministry for Foreign
Affairs of Finland

Identified risks of Climate Change from the perspective of rescue services

- Floods, all types!
- Snow load, heavy snow
- Avalanches
- Landslides
- Storms, falling trees (new in winter!)
- Changing, unpredictable ice conditions
- Extremely slippery conditions
- Problems caused by heat waves
 - Heat island effect, warming of buildings
- Wildfires
- Ticks, other insects
- Green transition and new technologies
- Tighter regulations
- (Climate) refugees

Are vulnerable sites,
people, infrastructure
identified in time?

**Adaptation and
preparedness!**

Extreme weather events

Extreme weather events are expected to become both more common and more intense as a result of climate change. Modeling them is difficult, but recognizing the change is particularly important from the perspective of rescue services.

The societies will adapt to everyday changes, but **extreme weather events, which still occur rarely, will become more extreme invisibly in the background.** Extreme weather events hit us by short notice, and if we are not prepared for them at reasonable level, there is a high risk that the very limited resources of rescue services will not be used effectively and targeted correctly.

Participating in areal/city planning

No necessarily legal basis for authority, such as with structural fire safety/rescue routes

Participation in general and detailed planning discussions and societal dialogue → also helps to ensure own resources

Who can speak? Who should represent the voice of rescue services?

Set in strategy → action plan → to implementation

Questions to be posed at a general level:

- What kind of future are the plans designed/measured for?
- What level of risk is acceptable?
- Does the plan take into account the available rescue service resources?
- How much does it rely on rescue service readiness?

- Where are the water flowing routes?
- Where will the water accumulate?
- Is there a risk of large flowing water masses? Where?
- Is the urban heat island effect a threat?
- Will buildings overheat?
- How will structures withstand wind and water masses?
- Is critical infrastructure at risk?
- Is the power supply for critical infrastructure secured?
- How are vulnerable populations positioned in relation to these risks? For example: power outages, floods, fallen trees...

Recommendations for rescue services on adapting to and preparing for the effects of climate change

- The impact of climate change on the operating environment – what does this mean at the local level? (regional risk assessment + strategy -> action plan)
- Analyzing well in advance what new skills and capacities are needed (e.g., new risks by the green shift)
- Active participation in discussions where it is possible to influence adaptation to and preparedness for the effects of climate change, especially in the built environment
 - aim of achieving concrete adaptation measures
 - improving the rescue services' ability to cope in the event of an extreme phenomenon
- Developing operations in wildfires (especially tactics)
- Rescue in flowing waters (at least needs assessment and capacity development in necessary locations)
 - Often no natural expertise in the fire department + no suitable equipment
- Taking tick risk into account/following tick spread towards north
 - Consider TBE vaccinations for personnel
 - Make tick checks routine after risky tasks; the risk of Lyme disease exists in large parts of Scandinavian countries
- Ensuring the operational capability of rescuers (e.g., hot days)
- Ensuring that the units can reach the incident sites in all conditions (e.g., smart routing during flooding, chains for fire units and spikes for personnel in extremely icy conditions etc.)
- Ensuring the continuity of rescue operations in long-term and wretched tasks



For more information
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