

Conclusion

Over time, an increased understanding of the many factors that contribute to the risk of fire has led to positive developments in the fire protection of commercial structures. Improvements in public fire protection systems and services, as well as increased use of private active or passive systems through fire-protection and loss-control engineering, has meant an overall decrease in the cost of fire.

A discussion of the factors affecting insurance premium rate demonstrates that, although building construction type is one factor used, there are many other equally important considerations when determining a property's level, fire risk, and hence its insurance premium. A similar level of fire safety can be achieved by various means. The sum effect of all fire safety factors should be weighed, and a variety of active and passive fire-protection measures can be assessed and market factors considered, optimizing both fire safety and overall cost for a commercial building.

Wood construction has benefited from all that has been learned regarding good design and appropriate active and passive fire-protection measures. The evolution of methods of construction has resulted in an enhanced level of fire protection, as reflected in the presented fire-loss statistics. Those statistics show that wood-frame construction can result in low fire-loss costs and that presence of sprinklers can further reduce that low cost by almost half. Consequently, well-designed wood construction is a costeffective means of protecting commercial endeavors from the risk of fire loss.

Preventing fire losses has always been more important to the insured than to the insurer. Although a particular fire loss may not be statistically significant to an insurance company, to the owner involved such a loss is not only a direct financial issue but it also impacts many other important business aspects, such as employee moral, access to suppliers and the economic health of the community.

