

What is an Acquired Structure?

Dear Reader:

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We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with municipal government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other MTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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The 2018 edition of National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1403, Standard on Live Fire Training Evolutions, defines an acquired structure as “A building or structure acquired by the authority having jurisdiction from a property owner for the purpose of conducting live fire training evolutions (§ 3.3.27.1).” This differentiates an acquired structure from a live fire training structure, which NFPA defines as “a structure specifically designed for conducting live fire training evolutions on a repetitive basis (§ 3.3.27.2).” NFPA recognizes that firefighters use other types of training props, and the 2012 edition defines “acquired prop” as “a piece of equipment such as an automobile that was not designed for burning but is used for live fire training evolutions (§ 3.3.1).”

Before 1986, when NFPA published the first edition of NFPA 1403, there was no consensus standard on live fire training. Before knowledge of environmental issues and a greater emphasis on firefighter safety increased, fire departments burned acquired structures with minimal concern for the smoke and toxic gasses released. They used flammable or combustible liquids such as gasoline or diesel fuel to ignite the fire, and started multiple fires at the same time rather than just one fire. Today, such practices are contrary to environmental sustainability, good safety practices, and common sense, which is why fire departments must follow industry standard guidelines to use an acquired structure for training in as safe a manner as possible. If a new recruit is going to panic during his or her first fire, it is better to have that happen in as controlled an environment as possible rather than on a working structure fire.

NFPA 1403 is a consensus standard created through the cooperation of many parties with an interest in the safe training of firefighters. As such, NFPA 1403 is the industry standard for live fire training, and a fire department that conducts training operations outside of the scope of the standard might expose the department and department members to significant liability should a person be injured or killed if a court determines that NFPA 1403 is the standard against which live fire training conduct is measured.

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