Session 4B:
How Historic Building Fires Shaped Modern Codes

Summary: This presentation offers an in-depth analysis of the causes and contributing factors in some of history's most notorious structure fires and outlines how the lessons learned eventually translated into modern code requirements. The discussion will include many well-known fires such as One Meridian Plaza, Station Nightclub, Hartford Circus, The September 11 attacks, Worcester Cold Storage Warehouse, and others.

Learning Objectives

After this session, attendees should be able to:

1. Recall historically significant fires (in terms of their impact on the code).
2. Identify the causes and contributing factors that lead to the severity of the incident.
3. Understand the lessons learned as a result of these fires.
4. Understand what eventually translated into code requirements as a direct result of these fires.
5. Recognize the resulting requirements in the modern codes as some have changed due to more than one fire.
6. Apply modern code requirements in a manner consistent with their intent.

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Tom holds a BS in General Science from Fordham University and a BS in Fire Protection Engineering from the University of Maryland. He is a registered Professional Engineer (Fire Protection Engineering) in 13 states and has over 38 years of experience. He was the editor of the 6th and 7th Editions of the NFPA 99 Handbook, and co-authored two editions of NFPA's Fire and Life Safety in Health Care Facilities. Tom is the Past Chair of the SFPE's Engineering Education Committee, Past Chair of the NFPA's Health Care Section, is a Fellow in the Society of Fire Protection Engineers, and is a fire protection team leader for GHD Inc in Duluth, GA.

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Matt has been working in the fire protection engineering industry since 2012. He is skilled in many phases of engineering operations and has experience with life safety assessments and surveys, fire modeling, fire sprinkler design/review, fire alarm review, and Alternate Means and Methods Requests. He is a graduate of Worcester Polytechnic Institute, with his Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, and Master of Science in Fire Protection Engineering.