



Fire Safety

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Fire incident at a coaching centre in Surat has resulted in the death of 22 students.

Facts

- As per **National Crime Records Bureau** figures, **17,700 Indians died – 48 people** every day – due to fire accidents in 2015. Of those who died, **62% were women**.
- **Maharashtra and Gujarat**, the two most highly urbanised states, account for about **30% of the country's fire accident deaths**, hence there is a **direct correlation between the deaths due to fire-related accidents and population density associated with urbanisation**.
- According to **India Risk Surveys 2018**, outbreak of fire poses risks to business continuity and operations and **ranks India at 3rd position in fire incidents**, especially in Northern and Western regions of India.

Causes of Fire Accidents in India

- **Violation of safety norms and lack of standardisation and regulation** is a major cause of fire accidents, as large scale construction of false roofs in commercial buildings and multiplexes is against the national building construction code.
- **High rise buildings are more prone to fire accidents** as they lack adequate in-built fire protection systems that makes salvaging operations difficult.
- **Poorly stored goods**, even though they are not flammable, helps to spread fire and hinder fire fighters gain access to the seat of the fire or **reduce the effectiveness of sprinkler systems**.
- **Unclear provisions of fire safety audit** in terms of scope, objective, methodology and periodicity of a fire safety audit.

Fire Safety Audit aims at assessing fire safety standards of an organisation, occupancy or building for compliance with the **National Building Code of India**, relevant Indian standards and the legislations enacted by state governments and local bodies, on fire

prevention, fire protection and life safety measures.

Lack of adequate resources, preparedness and poor fire services fail to ensure fire safety cover to the population.

- Based on a **2011 study, 65 percent deficiency was reported in fire stations.**
- According to Ministry of Home Affairs, in 144 towns with population over 1 lakh, there is a **huge deficiency of fire fighting infrastructure.**
- **78 percent of the budget allocated** to buying fire safety equipment and rescue vehicles went **unused across the state between 2010 and 2015.**

Fire service is a **state subject** and has been included **as municipal function in the XII schedule of the Constitution.** The **municipal corporations and local bodies** are responsible for providing fire services in many states.

- **Lack of awareness about the safety arrangements** before purchasing or hiring a flat in an apartment or before starting an institution.
- **Faulty Wiring:** PUF (polyurethane foam) used for plastic insulation carries a **high risk of accidental fire** as most of the times it is exposed to electrical wiring which on becoming heated due to overloading or short circuit catches fire immediately.

Preventive Measures

- **Modernisation of Fire safety equipment:** the government should provide financial support and assistance in augmenting and modernising the fire departments
- **Proper designing of electrical fittings** and regular maintenance of wiring (at least once in a year).
- **Building awareness** among citizens about fire prevention and protection measures by organising fire fighting workshop once in six months in localities/mohallas/schools with the involvement of local councillors/elected representatives.
- **Fire service departments should audit critical fire prone installations** (like high rise buildings, multiplexes in congested areas) periodically (once in six months) and take appropriate actions against erring establishments.
- **Proper demarcation of entry and exit points** in crowded buildings, **installation of fire fighting equipment** and their regular maintenance, periodic renewal of **No-objection certificates** by building owners in order to ensure fire preparedness.