



Maintenance and care of fire hoses

Introduction:

Normally fire hoses will be treated extremely rough during fire fighting operations, which is almost unavoidable. However, much can be done to prolong their service life.

Most important is the care of the fire hoses during training exercises, the maintenance after fire service and the storage.

Care of fire hoses during training exercises and fire service

Apart from abrasion and shock-loading- which are two of the most common causes of damage – the following should be noted:

- Do not exceed the maximum rated working pressure!
- Lay the hoses without kink and twist!
- Avoid dragging, especially over rough ground! If you must drag the hose, drag it flat, not on it's edge.
- Dragging of a kinked hose, especially when it contains water, causes immediately serious 'point abrasion'! During actual fire fighting this is sometimes unavoidable, but these damages are beyond the responsibility of the manufacturer.
- The impact of a coupling dropped from only a few feet onto the hose can puncture its lining. Therefore avoid dropping couplings.
- Prevent abrasion through pump vibration by bandages or sacking.
- Do not pull hoses over sharp edges.
- Avoid shock-loading and 'water hammer'!
- Hoses in service at turntable ladders should be secured by hose straps.
- Never lay hoses over hot embers!
- Never walk on hose to drive out water. Always under-run shoulder high.
- Keep hoses away from hazardous materials, acids, mineral oils and chemicals.
- Do not roll or kink frozen hoses. Always defrost!
- Prevent vehicles from running over hoses. Use hose ramps.



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Maintenance of fire hoses after use:

- After use or training mud, dust and dirt should be brushed off or washed and scrubbed with clean water or cleaned with a hose washing machine.
- Contaminated hoses should be soaked in warm water and detergents. Then hoses should be rinsed.
- Examine couplings and remove any rough edge, which might damage the hose when stored.
- Cleaned and tested wet hoses should be carefully dried, preferably in a hose drying tower without sun radiations.
- In order to avoid mildew and fungus it is recommended to store the hoses only when dry.
- Hose stores should be dry and free of frost (+ 6 to 23° C). Hoses shall be stored in rolls in suitable racks.

Pressure testing of fire hoses and hose assemblies:

Reasons for testing:

- To ensure that the hoses are fit to withstand the next service, they have to be subjected to a pressure service test after every use.

Recommendations:

- Every hose length including couplings should be tested periodically (for example every 12 months) and after each operational use at a pressure of 50 % in excess of the intended working pressure. Duration: 1 minute.
- Any defects should be noted and the hose repaired or replaced at once.

Your contact persons:



Holgar Herda

herda@parsch.de

+49 (0) 5451 / 929-224



Lisa Plake

plake@parsch.de

+49 (0) 5451 / 929-226

