

BIG BOX WAREHOUSE FIRES



Dale Way
Deputy Fire Chief

SIGNIFICANT BIG BOX FIRES 2020-2022



1. Redlands CA – Amazon Distribution
2. Plainfield IN – Walmart Distribution
3. San Jose CA – Home Depot
4. Spokane WA – Home Depot

Redlands CA – 3rd Party Amazon Distribution



Redlands Fire Department - 4 Stations

Received aid from neighboring FD's

Occurred June 5, 2020

600,000 sq foot - Concrete Tilt-up

Suspicious in nature

Appears that Fire Protection Systems were off.

Crews remained on scene for about a week after putting out hot spots

Redlands CA – 3rd Party Amazon Distribution



Plainfield IN – Walmart Fulfillment Center



Plainfield Fire Territory - 3 Stations

3 Engines, 1 Ladder, and 2 Medics

Occurred March 16, 2022

1.2 Million sq feet - Concrete Tilt-Up

“Plainfield Fire Department Chief Brent Anderson said the fire suppression system at the facility was working correctly at the time firefighters arrived. At some point a decision was made by firefighters to turn off the “riser” to the affected area.

“The overall system was kept on, but the sprinkler system in the area where the fire began was turned off.”

<https://www.wthr.com/article/news/local/firefighters-working-to-put-out-fire-at-avon-walmart-distribution-center/531-2f16d5ad-580f-4ad7-84ba-f24e9371f2e5>

Plainfield IN – Walmart Fulfillment Center



San Jose CA – Home Depot



San Jose Fire Department - 33 Stations

Occurred April 9, 2022

Received aid from neighboring FD's

98,000 sq foot - Concrete Tilt-up

Arson - Suspect Arrested (Former Employee)

Looked like Fire Protection Systems were off/disabled.

3rd + Alarm - More than 100 Firefighters responded to the scene and neighborhoods behind the store. With 4-person Companies = More than 25 Engines & Ladders responded! (to a smaller Big Box than the other incidents)

San Jose CA – Home Depot



Spokane WA – Home Depot



Occurred May 19, 2022

Spokane Fire Department - 16 Stations

Received aid from neighboring FD's

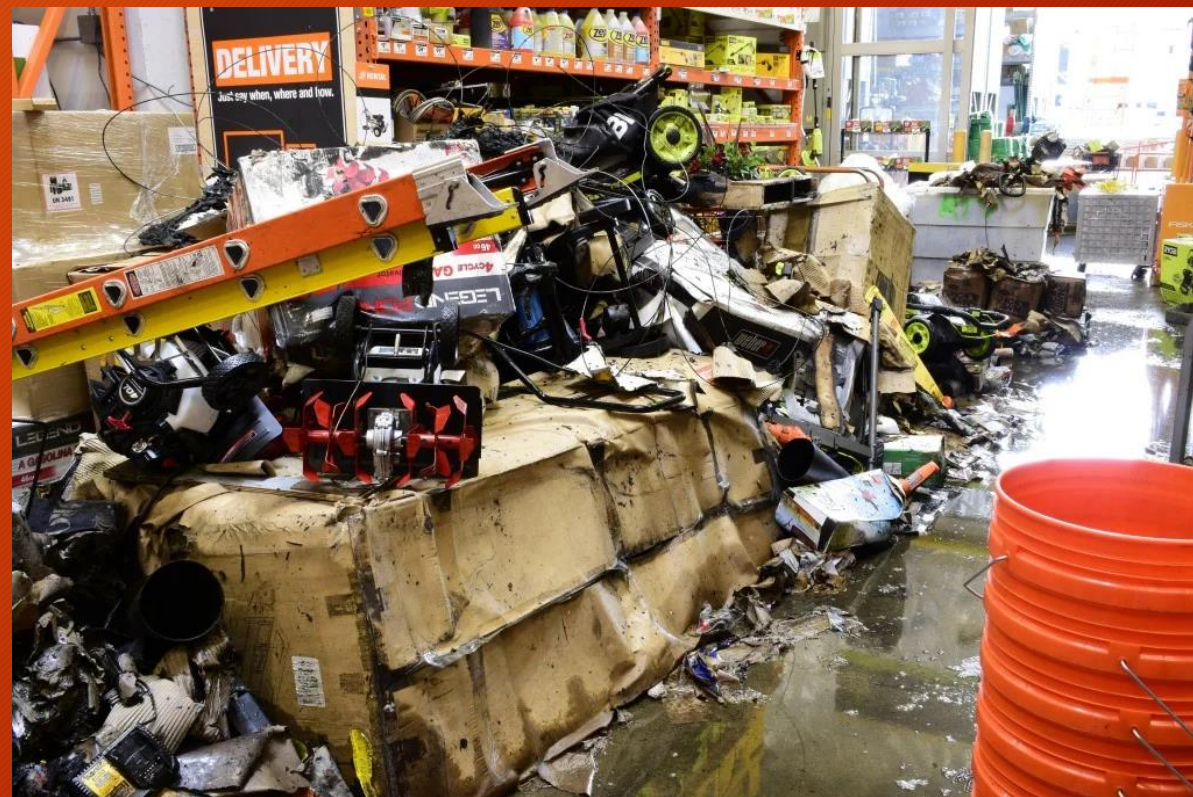
98,000 sq foot - Concrete Tilt-up

Arson in connection with attempted robbery - Suspect Arrested (F-59 yrs)

Fire Protection Systems controlled fire. Unknown level of sprinkler protection.

Only a 2nd Alarm.

Spokane WA – Home Depot



HAZARD / RISK



There are certain, inherent hazards in these facilities with the Fuel Loading and Storage Configurations.

Some of these facilities are M Occupancies that we (the public) walk around inside of shopping, e.g. Home Depot, Lowe's, Costco, Sam's Club, Walmart, Target, etc.

These buildings are primarily dependent on the built-in fire protection and the inspections conducted to prevent, control, and/or extinguish fires that occur in order to protect the jurisdictions assessed valuation and community jobs.

MESSAGE



No Fire Department can effectively fight a heavily involved Big Box Warehouse and emerge with a significant save without proper, active fire protection systems. This is due to the fuel loading and storage configurations contained inside.

San Jose - Largest Dept responding to the smallest building with the most people made no difference in the outcome of the Home Depot Building. Credit goes to them in saving the adjoining building (Unknown construction type and separation between Home Depot and surviving structure) Whether you have 3, or 6, or 33 stations. Hundreds or thousands of Firefighters.

These buildings require:

1. Built-In Fire Protection
2. Regular (Annual) Fire Inspections