



Rural Fire Protection (RFP) System Facts

In the event of a fire, having water available in area streams, ponds and cisterns gives an advantage to a fire department only if the water is readily accessible. Soft or obstructed ground limits access. Or the needed water may be located so far away from where it is needed that a fire department's ability to do its job of fire control is impaired.

Mobile water supply vehicles can move water from distant sources, but the critical factor is whether or not the fire department can maintain an uninterrupted supply of a predictable rate of water at the fire scene.

Installation of RFP systems in rural water sources improves direct attack and long-distance water shuttle operations for fire suppression. This allows quicker, easier, and safer access to water sources from a roadway instead of having to work on soft ground immediately adjacent to the pond or stream.

A RFP system can provide a simple, cost-effective solution to the need for access to water sources without delay in rural areas of a community, as well as help supplement an old or inadequate municipal system in more urban village areas. An RFP system consists of an arrangement of piping with one end in the water and the other end extending to dry land and available for connection to a pump/tanker truck. RFP systems have the following features:

- The typical Dry Hydrant configuration uses relatively inexpensive piping materials ("wet", pressurized, hydrant system materials can be more expensive).
- Are permanently installed in existing lakes, ponds, streams and cisterns.
- Provide a means of access whenever needed, regardless of weather.
- Allow years of simple operation with a minimum of maintenance.
- May help to reduce fire insurance premiums if the needed fire flow is met and certified for 2% drought conditions by a licensed engineer or certified hydrologist.
- Save time through operational efficiencies. Multiple lengths of hard suction hose may not be necessary; usually one section to the dry hydrant is enough. The strainer is also permanently attached, saving more time. Fewer people are needed to make a hookup compared to making a conventional direct drafting hookup.

A strategically placed RFP system with all-weather road access allows more water to be distributed in less time, and the water can be applied effectively on the fire. For fire fighters, RFP systems provide a quicker, easier, and safer access to water for fire suppression.

For more information on dry hydrants and other types of rural water supply systems, please contact Troy Dare, Rural Fire Protection Program Manager at (802) 828-4582 or dryhydrantguy@yahoo.com.