

Network of Fire Services in the Port of Antwerp, Belgium



The Port of Antwerp is a very complex area with associated risks. It is the largest integrated (petro)chemical cluster in Europe and the most diversified in the world. Port activities are carried out in two provinces and three municipalities. Due to this governmental organisation, the port is situated in multiple safety and security districts.

Fire and rescue operations in the port are executed by:

- two public fire services with a total of 7 fire stations in and around the port;
- dozens of private company fire services with different development.

In special circumstances the fire services are supported by the port (e.g. for deployment of tugboats with fire-fighting capabilities) or the federal Civil Protection agency (e.g. for deployment of very specific fire-fighting equipment).

Although there are frequent informal contacts between the fire services, there was no formal coordination with regards to the fire services (both public fire services and company fire services) in the port.

The opportunity to have various fire services work more closely together, generates more operational power for an equal or even lower cost. Since 2018, the Port of Antwerp, together with leading public and private fire services, have brought various safety partners together and has stimulated mutual connections. From 2021 onwards, the partners try to achieve more coordinated actions with regards to fire prevention, incident response and crisis management.

The partners involved are participating together in a project that focuses on true cooperation between public and private parties. In the beginning of 2022, the first eight partners will sign a letter of intent to collaborate. Expansion with more private organizations is explicitly pursued.

The project leads to more cooperation between the fire services and forms a basis for a better future operating and investment policy. In an operational fire service network, public and private fire services can work together better and coordinate investments.

The project will form the basis for a better operating and investment policy. In an operational fire service network, public and private fire services can work better together. We believe it will contribute to the continuity of port operations and minimize the impact of any incidents on the environment.