

Forestry Notes



New Jersey Fire Lookout Towers

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Cedar Bridge Tower, Ocean County

To report a fire

CALL:

911

The 21 Active Fire Lookout Towers

Tower	County
Apple Pie	Burlington
Bass river	Burlington
Batsto	Burlington
Bearfort	Passaic
Belleplain	Cape May
Blue Anchor	Camden
Budd Lake	Morris
Catfish	Warren
Cedar Bridge	Ocean
Culvers	Sussex
Dias Creek	Cape May
Greystone	Morris
Jamesburg	Middlesex
Lakewood	Ocean
Lebanon	Burlington
McKeetown	Atlantic
Medford	Burlington
Millville	Cumberland
Milton	Morris
Mizpah	Atlantic
Ramapo	Passaic



Jamesburg Tower



Apple Pie Tower



How Does a Lookout Precisely Locate Fires?

The **fire observer** in the lookout tower uses a dispatch radio to keep in constant communication with other towers.

After spotting a fire the observer uses a **Osborne Fire Finder**, a type of alidade, to sight the compass direction to the fire.



The observer then calls in a “smoke report” to the Division Headquarters. Observers ask another tower to get a sight line on the fire. Where the two sight lines intersect is the precise location of the fire. With other instruments and topographic maps on the tower walls the observers and the dispatcher can determine the travel distance so fire fighters on the ground can respond to the fire.

The fire observer is also responsible for gathering weather data used to determine fire danger ratings and expected fire behavior.

←The first Fire Lookout Tower in New Jersey was the cupola of the Batsto Villiage Mansion



A Typical Day In a Fire Tower

Your day begins with the long climb to the 8 x 8 foot fire cupola on top of the steel tower. Most of the towers are about 60 to 100 feet tall and this means a journey of at least 80 to 135 stair steps. Be sure to carry your lunch and everything you need for the day!

- ◆ Check in by radio with the Division dispatcher and other fire towers.
- ◆ Begin your day-long viewing routine of looking in all directions over the landscape.
- ◆ Take routine measurements of air temperature, wind speed and relative humidity.
- ◆ Keep in constant communication with other observers and division HQ about weather and fuel conditions.
- ◆ When you spot a smoke use your fire finder to determine, with the aid of other towers, where the fire is on the ground and notify the dispatcher at division HQ.
- ◆ Keep watch on the spread of the fire and be on the alert for other fires that may occur. Others are relying on your observation skills.
- ◆ At dusk, make the long climb down and rest for the next day.

At least one tower in each division is in operation when the woods are dry enough to burn. All towers are staffed in March, April, May, October, and November

When you see a fire! Call 911