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Photovoltaic panels: Firefighters threaten not to intervene

The President of the Royal Corps of Firemen, the commander Marc Gilbert, says he is ready, "not to intervene in a building equipped with photovoltaic panels if a person's life is not in play" as a safety Firefighters will be initiated.

The company Vinçotte Liege has been entrusted by the Walloon Region to develop technical recommendations to address the danger of electrocution for firefighters operating on roofs equipped with such panels.

The company Vinçotte, specializing in risk management, power mission is to prepare for the month of June 2012, a guide offering concrete recommendations for safety for installers of photovoltaic panels.

A company offers solar panels, since this week, security systems to allow people to interrupt the operation of photovoltaic incident. Marc Gilbert, "*it is very urgent that the Legislature take action on this binding. Photovoltaic panels are a great risk of electrocution for firefighters and this must stop .*"

Three dangers

The President of the Royal Corps of Firemen identified three dangers: the risk of electric fire in case of intervention, the risk of fire the electrical system and the risk of falling panels installed incorrectly. It requires that the legislation requires the ability to cut the electricity of these facilities during an intervention. The head men of the fire also forced advocates for building owners, to clearly indicate, by placing a sign, for example, the presence of photovoltaic panels.

In August 2011, the Walloon Region has asked the Federal Knowledge Centre for Emergency Preparedness to identify the dangers faced by firefighters called to intervene in a building with photovoltaic panels. A report was submitted in October 2011 at the Federal Public Service (FPS) Economy, SMEs, and Energy. It has called for tenders for the development of a guide in which several practical solutions are proposed.

A guide being developed

Vinçotte society, whose headquarters are located in Vilvoorde, won the contract. The company offers specialized services in inspection, testing and certification, as well as analysis and testing. And, for the most diverse applications in the fields of electricity, lifting equipment, pressure equipment, civil engineering, safety at work, environmental protection and protection against radiations.

The company has assembled a steering committee composed of representatives of the Walloon Region, the Ministry of the Interior, Fire and professionals she consulted in developing this guide which will be eventually

available on the Internet for the general public. Philippe Delaisse, the facilitator of sustainable building for the Brussels-Capital Region, rather, for its part, considered "*recommendations*" rather than "*coercive measures*" as called for firefighters.

Belga