

Where Did it Start?

This project started out as a school project looking into different types of lighting. With most of my designs, I wanted to try and find a problem that needed fixing, and one that would make a huge impact on peoples everyday life. I started looking into different types of emergency lighting, first starting out broad and then focusing more on the systems in buildings. My father was a fireman for 17 years at a chemical plant in Illinois and had numerous training in all types of fire situations. I was able to call upon his knowledge in the beginning stages to validate my findings before moving on. When I identified this possible problem of emergency lighting in buildings, there was a long list of tasks that needed to be completed now. I started off by doing observations. I went to hotels, schools and hospitals in the area to look into their current emergency lighting systems; all of which were using lighting mounted near the ceiling. The library on campus (being recently completed) was the only place who looked into this problem and mounted exit signs at floor level. I moved onto competitive bench marketing so that I could see if there was anything else in the market close that maybe no one in my area was using. This is where I also did extensive research into what types of lights are used in emergency situations and why. I researched a lot of fire fighting gear since they are the ones in this situation everyday. This then led me into my interview process where I interviewed numerous firefighters from across the state of Illinois. This is where I found another potential problem and that is what firefighting protocol is. Firefighters enter buildings that they are unfamiliar with on a daily basis but use their hoses to find their way out of a building. Protocol is that the first time they enter a building on fire is to find and save victims so they do not take hoses. This means that when a firefighter is saving the victim they could easily become lost inside an unfamiliar building. I was able to obtain a firefighters manual from one of the people I interviewed and studied building construction and fire behavior. I learned that the firefighters needed just as much help in these situations as normal people.

