

Tuesday e-Tech Alert

December 27, 2005



Retaining Records

As we close out another year, some organizations update their filing systems. A common question is how long records should be retained relative to individual sprinkler systems.

Most fire codes are considered legally binding and now require that systems be inspected, tested and maintained in accordance with NFPA 25. That standard currently requires (2002 edition) the following:

“4.3.3 Records shall be maintained by the owner.

“4.3.4 Original records shall be maintained for the life of the system.

“4.3.5 Subsequent records shall be maintained for a period of one year after the next inspection, test or maintenance required by the standard.”

The intent of Section 4.3.5 relative to subsequent records is that a quarterly inspection report be held at least one year after the next quarterly inspection report, and a report of a 5-year inspection be held for at least six years.

As it prepares the next (2007) edition of the standard the Committee is proposing to modify the record requirements. Proposed new wording of 4.3.1 will require that records be made, as well as require that records be made available to the AHJ upon request. Section 4.3.4 is proposed to incorporate an expanded version of present Section 4.6.1 so as to clarify the nature of “original” records:

“4.3.4. As-built system installation drawings, hydraulic calculations, original acceptance test records, and device manufacturer’s data sheets shall be retained for the life of the system.

“A.4.3.4 As referred to in 4.3.4, original records should include, at a minimum, the Contractor’s Material and Test Certificate, “as-built” drawings and calculations, and any other required or pertinent test reports. These documents establish the conditions under which the systems were first installed and offer some insight to the design intent, installation standards used, and water supply present at the time of installation. Original records are instrumental in determining any subsequent changes or modifications to the building or system.”

The biggest proposed change, however, is with regard to the retention time of subsequent records, such that a uniform 5-year period will be specified:

“4.3.5. Subsequent records shall be retained for a period of 5 years after the next inspection, test and maintenance required by this standard.”

Although the responsibility is placed on the owner for record keeping, it is prudent for the inspecting firm to also adhere to these minimums. This is primarily for purposes of access, i.e. referencing earlier test results to check on factors such as deterioration of water supplies, pump performance, etc. Longer term record keeping without easy access would be a company policy issue. Also, it should be noted that there might be city or state requirements that supersede these minimum terms.

Upcoming NFSA Technical Tuesday Online Seminar

Topic: Standard Spray Upright and Pendent Sprinklers

Instructor: Kenneth E. Isman, NFSA Assistant Vice President of Engineering

Date: January 24, 2006

The history of the development of the standard spray sprinkler will be explored along with the fundamental concepts that underlie the requirements for installation. Included are answers to frequently asked questions regarding sprinkler spacing and location as well as occupancy selection criteria. To register go to www.nfsa.org.

Spring 2006 Onlines Announced

For the Online Seminar Series in the first half of 2006, the NFSA has decided to focus on sprinklers and nozzles. The programs will be as follows:

Date	Topic	Instructor
Jan. 24	Standard Spray Upright and Pendent Sprinklers	Kenneth E. Isman, P.E.
Feb. 7	Standard Spray Sidewall Sprinklers	Kevin J. Kelly, P.E.
Feb. 21	Extended Coverage and Quick Response Sprinklers	Kenneth E. Isman, P.E.
Mar. 7	Residential Sprinklers	Victoria B. Valentine, P.E.
Mar. 21	ESFR, Large Drop and Specific Application Sprinklers	Kevin J. Kelly, P.E.
Apr. 4	Dry Sprinklers	Russell P. Fleming, P.E.
Apr. 18	Special Sprinklers	Cecil Bilbo, Jr.
May 9	Sprinkler Aesthetics and Protective Coverings	Russell P. Fleming, P.E.
May 23	Spray Nozzles and Directional Sprinklers	Cecil Bilbo, Jr.
June 13	Water Mist Nozzles	Victoria B. Valentine, P.E.

The level of all seminar topics is considered intermediate. A 30% discount is available when signing up for all ten seminars in the series.

Engineer of the Day Contact Information

The NFSA “Engineer of the Day” program, by which NFSA members have access to a staff engineer on call for technical assistance, has been improved with easier access. In addition to calling NFSA at 845-878-4200 and choosing selection 8 to reach the engineer of the day, members can now send e-mail questions to eod@nfsa.org

Are You Aware of CPFST?

More than a hundred students are currently enrolled in the NFSA's Certificate Program for Fire Sprinkler Technicians (CPFST). This 2-year program, initiated in 2004, has become the industry standard for technician training. It starts with the NFSA's two-week basic technician training seminar, and continues with a planned sequence of proctored on-the-job training, online training, chat rooms, and advanced training. The program includes periodic testing to monitor progress, and a certificate is awarded to recognize successful completion of the program. There are two "entry points" to the program each year, with the next entry point coming up in February/March of 2006. More information is available at the NFSA website or by contacting Ken Isman at isman@nfsa.org.

2006 Basic and Advanced Technician Training, NICET Inspection Seminars

The NFSA is the only organization that offers two-week basic technician training seminars, 3-day advanced technician training seminars, and NICET-oriented inspection and testing review seminars at various locations across the U.S. The 2006 schedule:

2-week Basic Technician Training

March 6-17, 2006 – Chicago, IL
August 14-25, 2006 – Seattle, WA or Denver, CO
October 16-27, 2006 – Philadelphia, PA

3-day Advanced Technician Training

April 18-20, 2006 – Chicago, IL
May 16-18, 2006 – TBD
October 3-5, 2006 – Minneapolis, MN

3-day NICET Inspection and Testing Certification Review

January 9, 10, 11, and 12, 2006 – first day of split sessions in five FL locations
January 24-26, 2006 – New Jersey
February 22-24 – Phoenix, AZ
February 28-March 2 – Washington State
May 9-11 – Washington State
June 27-29 – Anchorage, AK
July 11-13 – Edwards, CO

For more information, contact Nicole Sprague using Sprague@nfsa.org

To register visit www.nfsa.org.

NFSA Tuesday e-Tech Alert is c. 2005 National Fire Sprinkler Association, and is distributed to NFSA members on Tuesdays for which no NFSA Technical Tuesday Online Seminar is scheduled. Statements and conclusions are based on the best judgment of the NFSA Engineering staff, and are not the official position of the NFPA or its technical committees except as noted. Please send comments to Russell P. Fleming, P.E. fleming@nfsa.org