



**Tuesday e-Tech Alert**  
**January 23, 2007**  
**Number 74**

**Openings Limited in Walls of “Compartments” and “Small Rooms”**

A recent discussion with NFPA staff regarding the intent of the new definitions for “compartment” and “small room” in the 2007 edition of NFPA 13 has produced a surprise. Both definitions have been revised in the new standard to limit the amount of openings. Enclosures meeting either definition (Sections 3.3.5 and 3.3.15), as well as the enclosure required for application of the room design method in light hazard areas (Section 11.2.3.3.5(2)), are permitted to have unprotected openings in walls to an adjoining space if the openings have “a minimum lintel depth of 8 in (203 mm) from the ceiling and the openings do not exceed 8 ft (2.44 m) in width.” A single opening of 36 in. (914 mm) or less in width without a lintel is permitted in all three applications when there are no other openings to adjoining spaces.

During last week’s NFSA “Technical Tuesday” online seminar, the first in a series of ten dealing with the 2007 editions of NFPA standards, it became apparent that the wording of the definitions was somewhat vague relative to the application of the maximum 8 ft. The question was whether the intent was to limit the size of any single opening or to limit the aggregate width of all openings. As originally submitted by the NFSA Engineering and Standards Committee, the intent of the change was merely to avoid the use of these definitions and rules in applications such as a ballroom, where lintels might cross the ceiling in an otherwise uncomparted area. The phrase “in walls” was added by the NFPA committee to clarify that the openings are not permitted to be in the ceiling of the room or compartment. Based on past experience and parallel construction in the standard, the NFSA believed the Committee would have used the term “aggregate width” if they had meant to limit the sum of all openings.

However, when contacted to confirm this understanding, NFPA staff advised that they are interpreting the new wording to mean a maximum of 8 ft of openings in any one wall of a room. NFSA members should be aware that AHJs and others contacting the NFPA regarding the intent will be supplied with that interpretation until such time as the Committee is able to otherwise clarify its position through a formal interpretation.

These restrictions on openings have some applications that are obvious and some that are not. In the 2007 edition of NFPA 13 the small room definition affects the use of the small room rule, and the application to the room design method might lead to use of the density/area design method. The definition of “compartment” is used for requirements relating to mixing sprinkler sensitivity (Section 8.3.3.2), and for omission of sprinkler discharge from hydraulic calculations for areas protected by single sprinklers (Section 22.4.4.6.2).

**Upcoming NFSA Technical Tuesday Online Seminar – January 30th**

**Topic: Changes to the Installation Rules**

**Instructor: Cecil Bilbo, Jr., NFSA Director of Technical Services**

**Date: January 30, 2007**

This seminar is the second in a series of ten focusing on changes to the 2007 editions of NFPA 13, 13D, 13R, 20 and 24. Even if you will not soon be using the 2007 edition of NFPA 13, you will find that the changes and clarifications will affect your understanding of the requirements of earlier editions.

This program will focus on the extensive changes to Chapter 8 of NFPA 13 regarding the installation rules for sprinklers and other system components. Among the diverse topics to be discussed are the issue of omitting sprinklers from furniture such as lockers, decreasing the minimum spacing for ESFR sprinklers and a clarification of the rules regarding sprinkler protection under building projections such as porte-cocheres.

Information and registration for this seminar is available at [www.nfsa.org](http://www.nfsa.org) or by calling Dawn Fitzmaurice at 845-878-4200 ext. 133 or email: [dawn@nfsa.org](mailto:dawn@nfsa.org).

### **First 2007 NFSA “Business Thursday” Online Seminar – February 15th**

*(NOTE: This seminar has been re-scheduled from its original date of February 22, 2007)*

**Topic: Project Close-Out**

**Instructor: Michael Friedman, P.E.**

**Date: February 15, 2007**

Too often the final phases of a project nearing completion are overlooked as companies are involved with their work in progress and jobs just starting up. In actuality the successful closing out of a project is critical to complying with contract requirements, job profitability, and customer satisfaction. This course will explore the reasons that contractors must raise the importance given to this phase of a construction contract and offer ways and means to accomplish it successfully.

Information and registration for this seminar is available at [www.nfsa.org](http://www.nfsa.org) or by calling Dawn Fitzmaurice at 845-878-4200 ext. 133 or email: [dawn@nfsa.org](mailto:dawn@nfsa.org).

### **NFSA Sets 2007 Schedule for 3-day Advanced Technician Training and NICET Inspector Certification Review Classes**

The NFSA Engineering Department has set up the following classes for open registration:

|                      |                                     |                        |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>May 22-24</b>     | <b>ITM NICET Review</b>             | <b>Anchorage, AK</b>   |
| <b>June 19-21</b>    | <b>ITM NICET Review</b>             | <b>Wilmington, DE</b>  |
| <b>July 24-26</b>    | <b>Advanced Technician Training</b> | <b>Chicago, IL</b>     |
| <b>August 14-16</b>  | <b>ITM NICET Review</b>             | <b>San Antonio, TX</b> |
| <b>September 5-7</b> | <b>Advanced Technician Training</b> | <b>St Louis, MO</b>    |
| <b>November 6-8</b>  | <b>ITM NICET Review</b>             | <b>Providence, RI</b>  |

For more information, contact Nicole Sprague at 845-878-4200 ext. 149 or email: [Sprague@nfsa.org](mailto:Sprague@nfsa.org).

## **Remaining NFSA Two-Week Technician Training Events**

Just like the two-week technician training seminar held in Philadelphia in October, the seminar just completed in Denver, CO was totally sold out. Make your reservations early for the two remaining technician training events in 2007:

**April 16-27**

**Orlando, FL**

**September 24- October 5**

**Kansas City, MO**

These seminars also serve as starting points for the NFSA's two-year Certificate Program for Fire Sprinkler Technicians.

For more information, contact Nicole Sprague at 845-878-4200 ext. 149 or email:

[Sprague@nfsa.org](mailto:Sprague@nfsa.org)

*NFSA Tuesday e-Tech Alert is c. 2007 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 or those of other organizations except as noted. Opinions expressed herein are not intended, and should not be relied upon, to provide professional consultation or services. Please send comments to Russell P. Fleming, P.E. [fleming@nfsa.org](mailto:fleming@nfsa.org).*

*In the promotion of the fire sprinkler concept, the National Fire Sprinkler Association represents all fire sprinkler industry interests including fire sprinkler contractors, manufacturers and suppliers of fire sprinklers and related equipment and fire protection professionals. Established in 1905, the National Fire Sprinkler Association provides publications, nationally accredited seminars, representation in codes and standards-making, market development, labor relations and other services to its membership. Headquartered in Patterson, New York, the National Fire Sprinkler Association has regional operations offices throughout the country.*