



Tuesday e-Tech Alert
July 10, 2007
Number 89

National Electrical Code Fails to Eliminate Nuisance Notes

One of the documents processed at the 2007 NFPA World Safety Conference was NFPA 70 – the *National Electrical Code*. At the technical reports session, NFSA supported a successful floor action to eliminate three Fine Print Notes that have caused unnecessary confusion relating to the need for sprinklers in otherwise noncombustible concealed spaces. Unfortunately, the NEC Committee failed to endorse the floor action in subsequent balloting, resulting in the likelihood that these notes will continue in existence.

Each of the three Fine Print Notes in sections 770.154, 800.154 and 820.154 reads the same: “*See 8.14.1 of NFPA 13 (2002), Installation of Sprinkler Systems, for requirements for sprinklers in concealed spaces containing exposed combustibles.*” Each of these Fine Print Notes is attached to a section dealing with cables in ducts, plenums, and other spaces used for environmental air. Presumably these references will be updated to reference Section 8.15.1 of the 2007 edition of NFPA 13, but this simply exaggerates the potential underlying conflict.

Section 8.14.1.2.1 in the 2002 edition of NFPA 13 stated that noncombustible and limited combustible concealed spaces with *no combustible loading* did not require sprinkler protection. This was modified in Section 8.15.1.2.1 of the 2007 edition to recognize omission of sprinklers in such spaces with *minimal combustible loading*. A new annex section A.8.15.1.2.1 clarifies the intent, stating “*Minor quantities of combustible materials such as but not limited to: cabling, nonmetallic plumbing piping, non-structural wood, etc. can be present in concealed spaces constructed of noncombustible or limited combustible materials but should not typically be viewed as requiring sprinklers.*”

This section of NFPA 13 clearly allows sprinklers to be omitted in a space that has some combustible cables. The rest of section 8.15.1.2 covers other situations where sprinklers can be omitted from combustible concealed spaces, never mentioning cables or combustible contents that are not structural. However, since many users of the NEC do not routinely use NFPA 13 they may not understand or investigate the issue. They may read the Fine Print Note and assume that sprinklers will be required in these concealed spaces. This may find its way into project specifications in the form of a requirement that concealed spaces be sprinklered in order to accommodate combustible cable, even if NFPA 13 would not require sprinklers in the space.

Admittedly, NFPA 13 is not precise relative to the threshold amount of combustible cables that would require sprinklers in an otherwise noncombustible concealed space, a situation that has created concerns for some authorities having jurisdiction. In Massachusetts, a task group has been working in this area for more than a year, and earlier this month presented two options to code writers. The first is to continue to recognize that the presence of combustible cable in nonsprinklered noncombustible concealed spaces has not resulted in a problem. The second option is to omit sprinklers only where specific classifications of cable are used, with the

expectation that the requirement would affect the choice of cable rather than result in the installation of sprinklers in these spaces.

One Week Only – Half Price for “Business Thursday” Seminar Series

As a way of introducing its “Business Thursday” seminar series to its members, the NFSA is offering a special half-price rate this week only (July 10-17) for those who sign up for all six seminars in the new series for the second half of 2007. Instead of the normal price of \$125 per seminar, the group of 6 will be available for a total price of \$375 for NFSA members, \$750 for nonmembers. As shown in the table below, all six seminars feature important educational topics:

Date	Topic	Instructor
July 19	ICC Hearing Update	Jeff Hugo
Aug 16	How to Do Effective Strategic Planning	Don Pamplin
Sept 20	Developing Positive Relations with Fire Officials	Doyle Sutton
Oct 18	Recruiting and Retaining Employees	Buddy Dewar
Nov 15	Tort Reform Update	Dom Kasmauskas
Dec 20	Working with the AHJ	Bob Kleinheinz

Act quickly. Information and registration is available at www.nfsa.org or by calling Dawn Fitzmaurice at 845-878-4200 ext. 133.

Upcoming NFSA “Technical Tuesday” Online Seminar – July 17th

Topic: Multi-Purpose Piping Systems

Instructor: Russell P. Fleming, P.E., NFSA Executive Vice President

Date: July 17, 2007

NFPA 13 specifically recognizes the use of sprinkler systems with non-fire protection connections, and NFPA 13D and 13R also contemplate some types of combined piping systems. This seminar will provide a historical review of combination system concepts, review the current applicable rules of the NFPA standards, and discuss the potential impacts of their use. Do these systems simply represent an available alternative or are they the future of the fire sprinkler industry?

Information and registration for this seminar is available at www.nfsa.org or by calling Dawn Fitzmaurice at 845-878-4200 ext. 133.

Upcoming NFSA “Business Thursday” Online Seminar – July 19th

Topic: ICC Hearing Update

Instructor: Jeff Hugo, NFSA Manager of Codes

Date: July 19, 2007

With more than 43 states using versions of the International Code Council's (ICC) "I" Codes, every fire sprinkler contractor is affected by what is printed and enforced on the local level. In May 2007, the ICC held its Final Action Hearings on the latest supplements of these codes. Attend this online seminar to find out what went on, what was proposed, and what the fire sprinkler contractor needs to know and plan for. The NFSA is actively involved with the code revision process at every step. This seminar will suit those who are pro-active in their future business plans. Attendees: Fire Sprinkler Contractors, Authorities having Jurisdiction, Designers, Suppliers, and Manufacturers. Information and registration for this seminar is available at www.nfsa.org or by calling Dawn Fitzmaurice at 845-878-4200 ext. 133.

Additional NFSA Training Opportunities

Two-Week Technician Training Seminar

September 24- October 5 Kansas City, MO
November 5-16 Newburgh, NY

At the request of NFSA members, an additional seminar has been added for 2007. 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 using Sprague@nfsa.org or by calling 845-878-4200 ext. 149.

3-day Advanced Technician Training Classes

July 24-26 Chicago, IL
September 5-7 St Louis, MO

For more information, contact Nicole Sprague using Sprague@nfsa.org or by calling 845-878-4200 ext. 149.

NICET Inspector Certification Review Classes

August 7-9 Indianapolis, IN
August 14-16 San Antonio, TX
November 6-8 Providence, RI

For more information, contact Nicole Sprague using Sprague@nfsa.org or by calling 845-878-4200 ext. 149.

In-Class Training Seminars

NFSA also offers in-class training on a variety of subjects at locations across the country. Here are some upcoming seminars:

July 31 Introduction to Sprinkler Systems (1/2 day)(AM)///Pataskala, OH
July 31 Underground Piping (1/2 day) (PM)///Pataskala, OH
Aug 1 Pumps for Fire Protection///Pataskala, OH

Aug 2 Sprinkler Protection for Rack Storage///Pataskala, OH
Aug 14-15 Two-day NFPA 13 Overview & Intro to Plan Review///Centerville, OH
Aug 16 Hydraulics for Fire Protection///Centerville, OH
Sept 18 Sprinkler Protection for General Storage///Seattle, WA
Sept 19 Sprinkler Protection for Rack Storage///Seattle, WA
Sept 20 Pumps for Fire Protection///Seattle, WA
Sept 18-19 Two-day NFPA 13 Overview & Intro to Plan Review///Baltimore, MD
Sept 20 Pumps for Fire Protection///Baltimore, MD
Sept 25 Sprinkler Protection for General Storage///Eugene, OR
Sept 26 Sprinkler Protection for General Storage///Eugene, OR
Sept 27 Inspection, Testing & Maintenance///Eugene, OR
Oct 23 Introduction to Sprinkler Systems (1/2 day)(AM)///Woodland, CA
Oct 23 Underground Piping (1/2 day)(PM)///Woodland, CA
Oct 24 Inspection, Testing & Maintenance///Woodland, CA
Oct 25 Basic Seismic Protection (1/2 day)(AM)///Woodland, CA
Oct 25 Advanced Seismic Protection (1/2 day)(PM)///Woodland, CA

For more information on these seminars, or to register, please visit www.nfsa.org or call Michael Repko at 845-878-4207.

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.

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.