NFSA
The Voice of the Fire Sprinkler Industry

Tuesday e-Tech Alert

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Dealing with Bedbugs Poses Threat to Sprinklers

A recent discussion topic at the website of the Los Angeles Area Fire Marshals' Association was the possible danger to sprinklers from the current national resurgence in bedbugs. One of the vendors of remediation efforts had approached the fire marshals, asking if there could be problems in sprinklered occupancies when a room of infestation is treated by heating it to 140°F(60°C) for a period of four hours.

The obvious answer is yes, there could be a problem. Table 6.2.5.1 of NFPA 13 (2010 edition) limits the use of ordinary temperature rated sprinklers to areas with maximum ceiling temperatures of 100°F (38°C). Heat sources used to increase room temperatures can create "hot spots" with temperatures higher than the intended average. Even in cases where the temperatures are never sufficient to activate the sprinklers, the sprinklers can be damaged by weakening of solder links or stressing of glass bulbs through repeated bubble disappearance and reformation.

The vendor that approached the fire marshals group noted their company policy is to drain the system, temporarily replace all ordinary rated sprinklers with high temperature rated sprinklers, then recharge the system prior to heating the room. Following the treatment, the original sprinklers are put back in place. The vendor claimed being put at a disadvantage, however, from competitors who were simply installing insulated covers over the sprinklers or installing some type of ice-cooled covers during the treatment process.

The potential to damage sprinklers with temporary coverings is a concern. Even in the new allowance to clean sprinklers by means of compressed air or by a vacuum (A.5.2.1.1.2(5) in the 2011 edition), NFPA 25 is not intending that equipment be allowed to actually touch the sprinklers. The manufacturers of proposed temporary covers should be encouraged to seek product listings that would address potential damage issues.

Are there applicable rules? NFPA 25 – *Inspection, Testing and Maintenance of Water Based Fire Protection Systems,* requires that sprinklers be free of foreign materials and have sufficient clearance to equipment (Sections 5.2.1.1.1 and 5.2.1.2 in the 2008 edition). The 2011 edition of NFPA 25 also makes the distinction between system impairments and lesser categories of critical and noncritical deficiencies. Annex E suggests that a violation of Section 5.2.1.1.1, such as having foreign materials attached to or suspended from sprinklers, rises to the level of an impairment. This would be especially obvious if it involved sprinklers throughout the premises.

Bedbug treatments involving planned impairments would be required to follow all of the provisions of Chapter 15 of NFPA 25, including the assignment of an impairment coordinator. Special provisions would be applicable if a required system is to be out of service for more than 10 hours in a 24-hour period, such as building evacuation or establishment of an approved fire watch. Special occupancies such as health care facilities may have their own impairments requirements.

Upcoming NFSA/FSI "Best Practices Thursday" Seminar – Nov. 18th

Topic: Effective Sales Proposals
Instructors: Paul Johnson & Brian Cullen & Top Myers
Date: November 18, 2010

Would you like to explore the best possible techniques for delivering compelling sales presentations? Join us for this 45-minute presentation where we will cover the latest in persuasive proposal writing techniques that help you demonstrate your competitive advantage and take the focus off of price. One-on-one follow-up is available after the call at no additional charge.

Upcoming NFSA "Technical Tuesday" Seminar – November 30th

Topic: Rules for Revamping Systems
Instructor: Russell P. Fleming, P.E., NFSA Executive Vice President
Date: November 30, 2010

NFPA 13 does not define "revamping" of sprinkler systems, but contains some definite rules on the subject. In its broadest sense, revamping refers to all system modifications including tenant changes. This seminar will focus on what is permitted in terms of component re-use, pipe and nipple sizing, testing, and other aspects of these system alterations, including new rules intended to simplify certain types of changes.

Upcoming NFSA "SAM Friday" Seminar – December 10th

Topic: Steel Pipe Types and Manufacturing
Instructor: Drew Siddons, Allied Tube
Date: Friday, December 10th

This seminar provides an introduction to the types and manufacturing methods of steel pipe, and will include information on ASTM numbers, continuous welding vs. electric resistance welding, seamless products, corrosion resistance ratios, (CRRs), stencils, and more.

In-Class Training Seminars

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

Nov 30	Pembroke, MA	Sprinkler Protection for General Storage
Dec 1	Pembroke, MA	Sprinkler Protection for Rack Storage
Dec 2	Pembroke, MA	Sprinkler Protection for Special Storage
Dec 2	San Diego, CA	Sprinklers for Dwellings
Dec 3	San Diego, CA	Sprinklers for Dwellings
Dec 14	Tucson, AZ	Sprinkler Protection for Rack Storage
Dec 15	Tucson, AZ	Sprinkler Protection for Special Storage
Dec 16	Tucson, AZ	Standpipe Systems (1/2 day a.m.)
Dec 16	Tucson, AZ	Underground Piping (1/2 day p.m.)

These seminars qualify for continuing education as required by NICET, and meet mandatory Continuing Education Requirements for Businesses and Authorities Having Jurisdiction.

To register or for more information on any of the above seminars, contact Michael Repko at (845) 878-4207 or e-mail to seminars@nfsa.org

About the National Fire Sprinkler Association

Established in 1905, the National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA) is the voice of the fire sprinkler industry. NFSA leads the drive to get life-saving and property protecting fire sprinklers into all buildings; provides support and resources for its members – fire sprinkler contractors, manufacturers and suppliers; and educates authorities having jurisdiction on fire protection issues. Headquartered in Patterson, N.Y., NFSA has regional operations offices throughout the country. www.nfsa.org.