

TechNotes Issue # 399

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2018 NFPA Technical Session - A Step in the Process

As those of us in the industry are aware, NFPA 13 is nearing the end of the revision cycle which will result in the 2019 edition of this important standard. This process is a three-year endeavor and one which NFSA (under the direction of the Engineering and Standards Committee) as well as many others played an integral part. This revision cycle was especially challenging as the standard has undergone an entire reorganization.

On June 14, 2018, at the NFPA Annual Conference and EXPO in Las Vegas, the Technical Meeting (or Tech Session) was held. The Tech Session is a vital step in the revision process and can be thought of as opportunity for the public to comment on and potentially revise the NFPA standard prior to its being issued by the NFPA Standards Council.

Based upon my conversations with many in the industry, this step of the revision process is not widely known and this TechNotes will highlight the Tech Session portion in the standards development process.

The Tech Session is the 3rd step in the NFPA process. Step 1, known as the Public Input Stage results in the is First Draft Report. Step 2, known as the Public Comment Stage results in the Second Draft Report. Step 3, known as the Tech Session Stage can be summarized with the following excerpt from the article titled, "The NFPA Standards - The Revision Process and NFSA's Role," published in the May/June 2018 edition of The National Fire Sprinkler Magazine.

Tech Session Stage: *Now that the second draft has been posted, the public has a chance to review the second draft report. If someone is not satisfied with the work of the committee(s) that resulted in the second draft report, there is one more opportunity to amend the document. Following the rules of NFPA, a notice of Intent to Make a Motion (NITMAM) can be submitted. A NITMAM is simply a notice to NFPA that*

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an individual intends to file motion to change the document as published in the second draft. There are specific rules of who is authorized to make these amending motions.

The NFPA Standards Council will review all NITMAMs to ascertain that they have met the rules and are valid. If so these NITMAMs will become Certified Amending Motions (CAMs) and will be heard and debated at the technical session that is held in conjunction with the NFPA Annual conference. Only NFPA members who have joined the NFPA at least 180 days prior to the technical session can vote on these CAMs at the technical session.

If a CAM passes during the floor vote, this motion is sent to the appropriate technical committee which will vote to confirm or deny the successful amending motion. If confirmed by the technical committee, the amending motion will be sent to the standards council and will be included when the standard is issued.

If no NITMAMs were received on a particular document, this standard will be sent to the standards council to be issued as written in the second draft report.

The 2018 NFPA Tech Session addressed motions on the following eleven NFPA Standards:

- NFPA 72, National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code
- NFPA 110, Standard for Emergency and Standby Power Systems
- NFPA 1730, Standard on Organization and Deployment of Fire Prevention Inspection and Code Enforcement, Plan Review, Investigation, and Public Education Operations
- NFPA 1001, Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications
- NFPA 1981, Standard on Open-Circuit Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) for Emergency Services
- NFPA 13D, Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems in One-and Two-Family Dwellings and Manufactured Homes
- NFPA 13, Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems
- NFPA 101A, Guide on Alternative Approaches to Life Safety
- NFPA 289, Standard Method of Fire Test for Individual Fuel Packages
- NFPA 241, Standard for Safeguarding Construction, Alteration, and Demolition Operations
- NFPA 400, Hazardous Materials Code

Motions on these documents were debated and voted on by the members present at the Technical Meeting. Over 500 NFPA members were present for this debate and vote.

NFSA, under the direction of the E&S committee, submitted three motions to the documents: two for NFPA 13 and one for NFPA 13D.

The three motions submitted by NFSA were:



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- NFPA 13, Motion 13-5: Remove the new Hydrant Flow Test Adjustment language and return to the language of the 2016 edition[MH2] .
- NFPA 13, Motion 13-8: Reinstate requirements to install sprinklers in entrance vestibules.
- NFPA 13D, Motion 13D-1: Reinstate requirements to install sprinklers in interior pools and tennis courts.

These motions were debated on the floor and all were accepted by the members. It must be noted that the NFSA motions were submitted with a single goal in mind - Good Fire Protection. It is the opinion on the NFSA E&S Committee that these motions will maintain the high level of safety prescribed by these standards.

In total there were twenty-three motions debated at the technical meeting on the above mentioned eleven NFPA Standards. The NFSA E&S committee reviewed these motions and developed a voting guide on those CAMs that would impact our industry.

While it is true that this step in the process can become contentious at times, the goal of the NFSA and all of the other stakeholders in this process is to improve the NFPA standards and ensure they continue to provide the level of safety to life and protection of property the NFPA standards are known to provide.

The vote during the technical meeting is not the end of the revision process. Based upon NFPA Regulations Governing the Development of NFPA Standards, certain amendments are returned to the appropriate technical committee for balloting.

Finally, the NFPA process allows an appeal. The NFPA Standard Council will hear any appeals that are filed on a particular standard. This final appeal process is to ensure that the entire process as outlined above has been conducted in a fair manner and in accordance of the NFPA rules for standards development.

Once the standards council has ruled on all appeals, the document in question is issued as an official NFPA Standard. For this cycle, the Standard Council will meet August 13-15, 2018.

NFSA is heavily invested in this process for the documents that impact our industry. NFSA staff, the Engineering and Standards Committee and NFSA members who represent the NFSA on the NFPA technical committees, are committed to this process. A lot of time and effort is invested, on behalf of our members to ensure that the relevant NFPA standards continue to provide unsurpassed life and property protection and ensure our industry is represented in this process.

For more information on the NFPA Standards Development Process please see the article "The NFPA Standards - The Revision Process and NFSA's Role" published in the May/June 2018 edition of The National Fire Sprinkler Magazine which is available to members on the NFSA website.

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Full results of the technical meeting and a summary of the process can be viewed on the NFPA website.

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25 and Advanced
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