

TechNotes Issue # 438
April 28, 2020

The following issue of TechNotes has been written by Roland Asp, C.E.T., Manager of Codes and Standards for the National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA). Roland serves as the Secretary of NFSA's Engineering and Standards Committee.

Engineering and Standards Committee: Still effective during the Pandemic

One of the many strengths and member benefits of the NFSA is the association's input to and influence on the technical requirements of the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) standards and relevant building codes. For example, many NFPA installation standards are revised every three years with the intent to improve these documents and incorporate new fire protection concepts. NFSA has a significant impact in this arena. NFSA staff, however, does not propose changes to these documents in a bubble, instead any proposal or changes to relevant codes and standards come from members in the form of the NFSA Engineering and Standards Committee (E&S). Even in these extraordinary times, E&S has continued its role as the most effective technical voice of the fire sprinkler industry.

The E&S committee's purpose as outlined in its operating policy is as follows:

- *To promote and support the overall mission of NFSA and the purpose and objectives of model codes and standards development.*
- *To promote the development of codes and standards that are scientifically and technically sound, that encourage creativity and innovation in the development of new methods and technologies, and that set reasonable standards intended to minimize the effects of fire and related hazards.*

Upcoming Technical Tuesdays

May 19, 2020

Potential Changes to 2022 NFPA 13 Installation and Residential (NFPA 13/13D/13R)

Presented by Roland Asp, C.E.T., Manager of Codes and Standards

[**Register Here**](#)

EOD Submissions

Via Email : eod@nfsa.org
Via Phone : (443) 863-4464

To improve your response time, please include in the email subject line the following information: code/standard and edition year (example: **NFPA 13 2016, 2018 IBC, 2017 NFPA 25, etc.**).

Thank you for your membership in the NFSA.

- *To promote standards with non-restrictive means and methods of compliance to encourage competitive commercial availability of the resources, materials and products required to be employed. Recommended changes to the standards should avoid proprietary requirements.*

The E&S committee is composed of NFSA member representatives from all aspects of our association. This committee includes some of the best technical minds in the industry - contractors, sprinkler manufacturers, suppliers, as well as special experts (members at large). Representatives from other applicable organizations, such as Underwriters Laboratory (UL) and Factory Mutual (FM), also participate. This diverse membership ensures that the E&S committee has a balanced and far reaching knowledge base to help ensure our industry continues with our enviable record of fire protection while keeping up with innovations in the field.

The E&S committee is a large committee with 55 members in with 29 voting members. Leading this committee is George Stanley, Senior Vice President of Wiginton Fire Protection Engineering, Inc., based in Orlando, Florida, as committee chair and Tim Bowe, PE, President/CEO of ABCO Peerless Sprinkler Corp., based in Hicksville, New York, as vice chair. The members of the committee are its true strength and its members work tirelessly to promote the fire sprinkler industry and to ensure that the high standard of "good fire protection" set by predecessors is maintained.

Traditionally, E&S has discussed codes and standards issues during semiannual two-day in-person meetings. The Spring 2020 meeting was initially scheduled for March 31 - April 1. As we are all aware, this in-person meeting was not possible due to the COVID-19 outbreak. However, the work of the committee could not be ignored, and the committee showed its flexibility and still effectively carried out its responsibilities.

To adjust to the COVID-19 elimination of an in-person meeting, E&S held weekly 2- 3 hour virtual meetings over the course of four weeks, and while this format was new to many of us, the results were certainly positive and productive. These virtual meetings were designed to deal with important and time sensitive E&S matters.

In order to make this adjusted schedule effective, the agenda was limited to two main aspects within E&S's scope of responsibility from its operating policy:

1. *The E&S Committee shall recommend from*



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within itself or from within the NFSA as a whole, for the Board of Directors confirmation, appropriate individuals to serve on outside committees whose activities relate to the scope of activities of the E&S Committee.

The E&S committee has representatives on many NFPA technical committees. In fact, there are representatives of the E&S committee on over 95 NFPA committees. This representation allows the NFSA and its members a voice and to have a meaningful impact in the NFPA process. This impact only happens because of the commitment of the E&S committee representatives and their supporting companies.

As part of these virtual meetings, E&S reviewed the committee representatives and assigned appropriate persons to apply to any open seats on applicable NFPA committees.

2. The E&S Committee shall review and recommend changes in design, installation, maintenance, or performance requirements for fire sprinkler and related systems as promulgated by any recognized standards-making organization.

The E&S committee reviews and recommends changes to codes and standards that impact our industry. The strength of NFSA in this process is the technical expertise and the unity that NFSA brings to the standard-making process. An E&S proposal is not a proposal by one person but instead is a proposal of the entire E&S committee and by extension the entire NFSA membership.

Currently many NFPA standards important to our industry are in cycle. NFPA 13, NFPA 13R, NFPA 13D, NFPA 24, NFPA 241 and NFPA 20 are in 2nd draft stage and public comments are due by May 6, 2020. Additionally, NFPA 25 is also in cycle and public inputs are due on June 30, 2020. E&S concentrated on developing comments and inputs for these documents.

In order to achieve this work, the following general schedule for these virtual meeting was established:

1. Meeting 1: April 1, 2020

- a. Updates
- b. NFPA Technical Committee Representation
- c. NFPA 13 Public Comments Development

2. Meeting 2: April 9, 2020

- a. NFPA 13 Public Comments Development (cont'd)

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- b. NFPA 13R/13D Public Comments Development
- c. NFPA 24 Public Comments Development
- d. NFPA 241 Public Comments Development

3. Meeting 3: April 15, 2020

- a. NFPA 13 Public Comments Development
 - i. Task Group - Single Point Density
 - ii. Discharge Report from FM
 - iii. Task Group - Obstructions
- b. NFPA 14 Pre-First Draft Discussion

4. Meeting 4: April 22, 2020

- a. Ballot Discussion
- b. NFPA 20 Public Comments Development
- c. NFPA 25 Development
- d. Code Development Team
 - i. Possible NITMAMs to NFPA 1
- e. NFPA 291 Public Comments Development
- f. NFPA 24 Public Comments Development
(cont'd)

During the course of the four weeks, approximately 90 separate comments and inputs to NFPA standards were debated and agreed upon by the committee. NFSA staff will now take these agreed upon recommended actions and submit them to the relevant code/standard.


The results of these inputs will be discussed by the various NFPA technical committees in upcoming first and second draft meetings and will be part of the process of improving these documents and incorporating new fire protection concepts.

Many of these inputs and concepts will have a significant impact on our industry moving forward. For example, some of the potential changes to the next edition (2022) of NFPA 13 may include:

- Moving away from the density/area curves in favor of single point density.
- Treating commodities cartoned in cardboard as encapsulated
- Allow dry systems using nitrogen generators to use a C-value of 120

Future NFSA publications will highlight changes to the next edition of NFPA standards.

NFSA would like to thank the E&S members and the many staff members who made this virtual E&S meeting process a success. The importance of the E&S committee's contributions to our industry cannot be understated and were certainly not diminished despite the extraordinary circumstances we are



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