

This issue of TechNotes was written by Jeni Pierce, NFSA's Manager of Training and Education.

Contractor Issues: It's not me, or is it?

The fire sprinkler industry, much like relationships, has its fair share of challenges. Whether you're embarking on a large new construction project or performing routine inspection, testing and maintenance (ITM), it's essential to anticipate and address these issues head-on. So, let's explore some common construction woes and potential solutions.



Poor Communication

Construction involves copious amounts of paperwork—contracts, staffing, insurance certificates, and material orders. Handling this efficiently can be challenging. Unforeseen conditions (product delays, failed inspections, or staffing) can wreak havoc on budgets. Miscommunication between stakeholders—contractors, architects, clients and the local AHJ—can lead to misunderstandings and project delays.

Establish clear channels of communication. Regularly update all parties on progress, changes, and challenges. Ensure that you are familiar with all local rules and regulations to avoid frustration as the project moves to completion. Using specific code or standard references, when possible, can help to maintain clear and concise intentions from all parties.

Technology

The construction industry tends to lag in adopting new technologies. Budget and staffing constraints often hinder the implementation of cutting-edge tools. Additionally, new technologies such as computer-based reporting have led to many companies having to quickly reassign or hire new staff to accommodate mandatory reporting.

Embrace technology! Consider integrating real-time data collection, drone surveillance to monitor large projects, virtual reality for visualizing designs or wearable devices to enhance safety and efficiency. Go digital and explore document management systems that categorize, track due dates, and streamline communication. A paperless approach reduces errors and speeds up processes.

SIMPLIFYING CORROSION PREVENTION...



Staffing

Industry-wide there seems to be a lag in bringing in a new wave of qualified workers. Staffing shortages often lead to overworked team members, frustration, and injury. Proper training can also become difficult when you are in a rush to get people out into the field and onto the jobsite.

Work closely with your local resources- vocational schools, high schools, and community partners to advertise or draw in new recruits. Utilize community activities and job fairs to bring awareness to the fire protection industry. Host a side-by-side burn demonstration at a community event and show the importance of fire sprinklers.

Take the Hard Look

Taking a look at internal processes may reveal that the issue *is* you. While you may realize a misstep on your end, it is always a good idea to meet the challenge head on to avoid future fees, delays or strained relationships. If you have a field employee who continues to make the same mistake or a local AHJ that you continue to struggle with during plan review, refer back to clear communication. Proper education for both sides may be the solution that keeps your business on track. Keeping up with the latest technology, legislative issues and local requirements is the key to not only maintaining a competitive edge, but also maintaining professional connections.

Remember, addressing issues requires teamwork, transparency, and adaptability. So, whether it's a faulty materials order or a blueprint mix-up, tackle it head-on. After all, in construction (and relationships), it's not about blame—it's about finding solutions!

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Training and Education



[Sign-Up for one of our Layout Technician Pathway Courses](#)

NFSA's newly updated fire sprinkler Layout Technician Pathway (LTP) prepares fire sprinkler layout and design professionals for NICET Levels I & II certifications. It also provides a great refresher for those who have been designing systems but need a comprehensive refresher. Students will receive a hard copy of the recently updated and revised "Layout Book" as well as a copy of the 2022 edition of the NFPA 13 standard.

The LTP consists of two parts. Students must first complete the on-line Part 1: Fundamentals before attending the in-person Part 2: Application session. The 25 self-paced online modules cover everything from "Parts of a Sprinkler" to "Introduction to Fire Sprinkler Calculations." The 3-day in-person instructor-led Part 2: Application class applies the content learned in the previous Fundamentals course. There are four in-person and one virtual session offered in 2023.

NOTE: Students must register for Part 1: Application at least one month before the start of in-person Part 2: session in order to allow enough time to complete the on-line modules.

Layout Technician Pathway cost:

Members: \$2,200.00

Non-members: \$4,400.00 – [Join here](#) to save 50%!

Registration Deadline for Fundamental & Application	Layout Technician: Fundamentals Completion Deadline	Layout Technician: Application Class Dates	Location
23-Apr-24	20-May-24	May 21-23, 2024	TX
1-Jul-24	28-Jul-24	July 29-31, 2024	CO
23-Sep-24	11-Oct-24	October 12-24, 2024	Virtual

[Check Out All Options Here](#)



Join us for Tech Tuesdays!

Our next Tech Tuesday will be March 19, 2024 from 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm eastern time.
The topic will be Contractor Issues.

This course will provide a general overview of common issues challenging today's contractors. Solutions and trouble-shooting ideas will be shared along with resources already in place to keep your company running smoothly.

Member Cost: Free

Non-member Cost: \$50.00 Learn more about membership.

*** As of October 2023, NFSA has transitioned back to Microsoft Teams using the Webinar client to deliver Tech Tuesdays.

With this process, once you have registered for the event you be sent an email with a Microsoft link that will bring you to the Microsoft Teams Event registration page. You must provide simple identifying information here to generate your email with the "Join" link to the Webinar.

We must be able to identify each participant as accessing, being present, engaging, and evaluating the course to issue a CEU Certificate.

Thank you for your patience, we will continue to improve the user experience as we continue this transition back to Microsoft Teams. Your feedback is always welcome!

[Register for the next Tech Tuesday Here](#)

National Fire Sprinkler Association

514 Progress Dr, Ste A,

Linthicum Heights, MD 21090

1-800-683-NFSA (6372)



The National Fire Sprinkler Association is proud to present our NEW 2019-2020 Edition EOD Handbook

The EOD Handbook is now a three-volume set of over 1,500 pages covering hundreds of topics that are relevant to automatic fire sprinkler systems, standpipes, water supplies, inspection, testing and maintenance, codes, and standards.

Order the latest volume, the 2019-2020 Edition, as a single book or order the three-volume set!

