NFSA NATIONAL FIRE SPRINKLER ASSOCIATION
The Voice of the Fire Sprinkler Industry

TechNotes

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This issue of TechNotes was written by Vincent Powers, NFSA's Inspection, Testing and Maintenance Specialist.

NFPA 25, 2026 Edition, Public Inputs

NFPA 25, *The Standard for Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems*, is also known as the "maintenance "or the "ITM" standard. This standard sets forth the requirements for the building owner to properly inspect, test, and maintain a building's fire sprinkler system as well as what actions are required when a change in use, occupancy, or storage method has occurred.

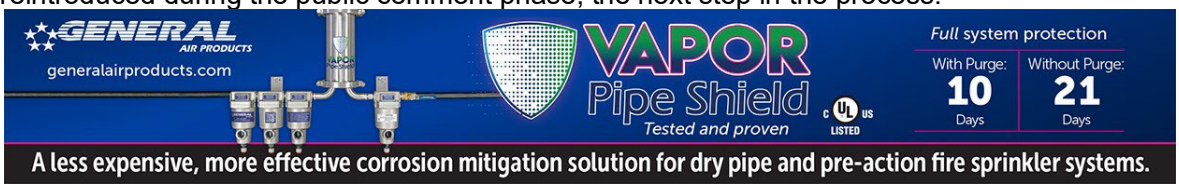
This standard, like many other codes and standards, is revised every three years. Many jurisdictions typically do not adopt the latest standard but unless the state or local agencies prohibit it, the latest standard should always be deemed the most current and should be used when applicable and allowed by the authority having jurisdiction.

This issue of TechNotes is to discuss the 2026 edition first draft proposals to NFPA 25. The first draft for an NFPA document is where the cycle begins by opening up the request for public inputs. This is the stage where anyone can make a suggested change to the standard. This person does not need to work in the fire protection industry but must have an NFPA account and must provide a reasonable substantiation as to why they are submitting the change. This issue of TechNotes will review some of the proposed changes for 2026 and the committee's suggestions on how to address them.

For the First Draft of the 2026 edition there were approximately 152 suggested changes (Public Inputs) and 101 of them were essentially accepted (First Revisions)

Dwelling Unit Definition

Public Input (PI) No. 152 proposes the addition of a definition for "dwelling unit." This suggestion stems from related inputs, such as PI No.151, which recommends replacing all standard response sprinklers in a dwelling, and PI No. 150, which proposes replacing sprinklers older than 75 years. However, the committee rejected these proposals due to insufficient data supporting the need for such requirements. Since the first draft, further testing has been conducted, and a report has been issued. Consequently, this topic has been reintroduced during the public comment phase, the next step in the process.



Backflow Prevention Device Definitions

There were a few public inputs to remove the reference to Double Check Valve Assemblies (DCVA) and Reduced Pressure Backflow Assembly (RPBA) backflow preventors as they are not required to be inspected other than internal inspections every 5 years. However, the DCVA and RPBA are not specifically mentioned anywhere in the standard with the exception of an annex note.

System Riser Definition

PI No. 137 adds the definition of a system riser. Most in the industry look at the system riser as where the water supply enters the building. NFPA 13 added this definition and then it was carried to NFPA 25 for this edition. It clarifies that a riser is a horizontal or vertical pipe between the water supply and the mains or cross mains and contains a control valve. This means that each floor control valve assembly is considered a riser, which again means that a hydraulic information sign and a general information sign is required on every floor. Just a note, systems installed prior to the 2007 edition of NFPA 13 will require an information sign, not a general information sign.

Frozen System Guidance

PI No. 172 provides the owner with requirements for when a system has frozen, along with some annex language. For example, inspect all of the pipe, fittings, and components to determine if there is further damage or deformities, test the system with air, then perform a hydrostatic test just to name a few items.

Repair Timelines

PI No. 16 seeks to provide the owner with suggested repair times for critical, non-critical and impaired systems. Similar rules for compliance are also found in the 2021 and 2024 NFPA 1 Fire Code. The original PI language was rejected and in the 2nd draft new language will be proposed to address the technical committee's comments. The new language will be reviewed by the committee in September during the 2nd draft meeting.

Documentation Cabinet

The 2025 edition of NFPA 13 will add a requirement for a documentation cabinet to be installed on new installations to aid in retaining required documentation such as the original acceptance tests, as-builts, and hydraulic data plates. PI No. 12 added the requirement to inspect for this cabinet; however, there will be some discussion at the 2nd draft meeting as to whether NFPA 25 should require this inspection and if so, should it be a retroactive requirement.

System Gauges

Currently there is nothing in NFPA 25 that states when a gauge is considered new even though it is common assumption that it is new until the day it is put in service. PI No. 23 seeks to clarify this with some annex language addressing the manufactured date and the shelf life of the gauge is not used to age the gauge. The clock starts when the gauge is installed.

Internal Inspections

Several public inputs were submitted in relationship to internal inspections of dry, preaction, and deluge systems. Currently a dry pipe valve must be opened annually regardless of how it is reset, while preaction and deluge is permitted to be inspected internally every 5 years, if the valve can be reset externally. The two first revisions may not seem important in that they are striking out the 5-year internal requirements, but that leaves the requirements in the standard to open these valves annually. For clarification, once a PI is accepted, it becomes a First Revision (FR), which will then be balloted by the committee for approval.

Conclusion

These are just a few examples of the suggested changes for the 2026 edition of NFPA 25. It is important to note that even if changes were accepted or denied in the first draft, their status is not final. The NFPA process allows for any public input or first draft item to be reopened in the second draft. For example, the requirement to open preaction and deluge valves annually was resubmitted in the second draft, proposing a change to a 3-year interval.

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16-Dec-24	12-Jan-25	January 13-16, 2025	West Palm Beach, FL
21-Apr-25	18-May-25	May 19-21, 2025	St. Louis, MO
11-Aug-25	7-Sep-25	September 8-11, 2025	Tacoma, WA

Check Out All Options

Register for our next Tech Tuesday NOW!

Our next Tech Tuesday will be September 17, 2024, from 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm eastern time. The topic will be NFPA 25, 2026 edition, Public Inputs.

We will briefly discuss the NFPA process, the proposed changes to the 2026 edition of NFPA 25, and what public inputs have been resolved. We will also review the current stage of the 2023 NFPA 25.

Member Cost: Free
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UPDATE We have updated our enrollment process for Tech Tuesdays. If you have already registered for this Tech Tuesday, please disregard any links you have received. You will receive a reminder email with the updated link on the Monday prior to the Tech Tuesday session going forward. It is vital to ensure participation credit for attendees to log on with the Microsoft account they used to register. The link should not be shared as those participants will not be able to be tracked.

Register for the next Tech

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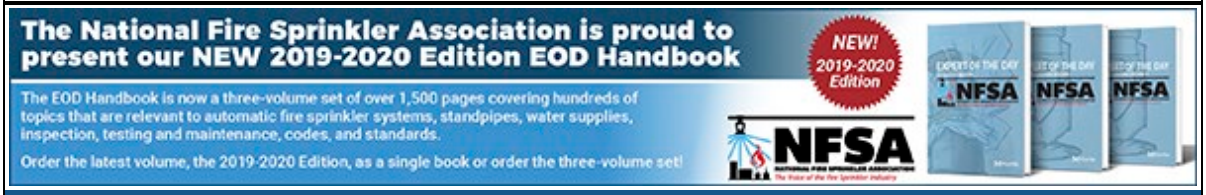

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