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also

Staffing Issues & Challenges

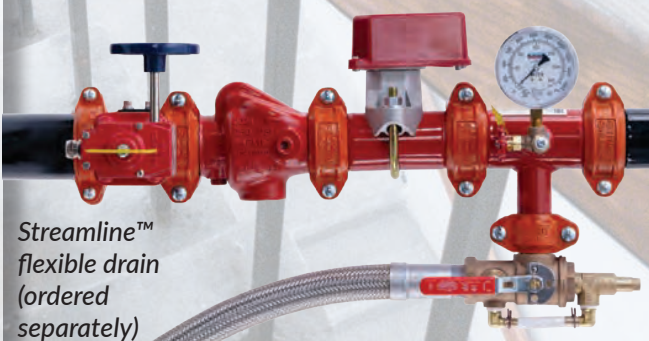
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~ ON THE COVER ~

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

12 Quizzes for Experienced Project Managers and Installers

From Aegis Fire Protection, LLC

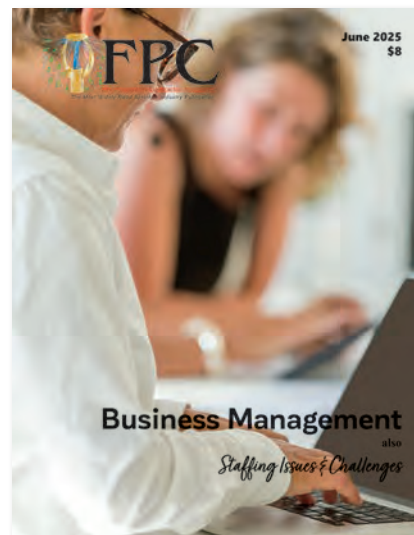
STAFFING ISSUES & CHALLENGES

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By Diego Olmos

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By Eduardo Lopez



In this edition, we share some helpful advice and suggestions related to Business Management and the ever-present Staffing Issues and Challenges. Featured articles begin on page 12. Others on the “don’t miss” list include columns: Guest Editorial, Scholarships, Design, Inspections, and Other Voices. Our advice though? Read it cover to cover!

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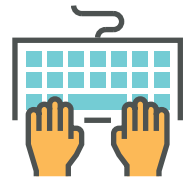
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Guest Editorial

Why I Remain in the Union - 50 Years Later

By Jerry D. Watts, M.S.F.P.E.

The editorial for the May 2025 *FPC* edition caught my eye and got me to thinking. As regular readers of *FPC* might be aware, I have been a U.A. Local 669 Member for just over 50 years. From time to time, I get asked the question (in a positive fashion) why I still stay with the Union after all these years – especially when they know I haven’t touched a wrench or worked with the tools for some 45 of those years. My strategy for joining 669 in the first place was to gain the necessary experience to become a sprinkler designer. This was not my original plan. I was good enough as a center/long snapper at the University of Washington to garner the interest of both the Dallas Cowboys (Coach Tom Landry) and the Oakland Raiders (owner Al Davis) in 1973 – three fractured vertebrae found at my (NFL) pre-draft physical put the brakes on those career plans. Fortunately for me, my father was a longtime GRINNELL employee in the Los Angeles office. I had spent school summer vacations working there for my dad. I have previously reported in this publication that GRINNELL Corp. used to encourage prospective designers to spend a minimum of one year “in the field” as part of their OTJ training.

“I became a 669 Member and was afforded the opportunities to work union jobs in Hawaii, Alaska, Seattle, Richland (WA), Portland (OR), Columbia/Baltimore, and Palm Beach, mostly with GRINNELL.”

So, you can imagine the transition for a highly celebrated, Division 1, NFL-prospect college football player going from 60,000 cheering, maniacal fans in Husky Stadium to a probationary 669 sprinkler apprentice. Actually, no; you nor anyone else could fathom a life change of that magnitude. But I made the best of it. The pay was minimal (you do know of the meaning of indentured apprentice, que no?) but the working location was not too awful – Honolulu, Hawaii and subsequently Maui. In 1974, Maui was really paradise for me.

With that basic background, I became a 669 Member and was afforded the opportunities to work union jobs in Hawaii, Alaska, Seattle, Richland (WA), Portland (OR), Columbia/Baltimore, and Palm Beach, mostly with GRINNELL. Based on those five years of field experience, I gained a tremendous amount of knowledge and experience that would ultimately contribute to my successful transition to sprinkler designer/estimator (“Automatic” Sprinkler Corp. of America) to my present position of President and Principal Fire Protection Engineer at ACCENT Fire Engineering Int’l. Ltd. (Santa Fe, NM) for the past 34 years. I served my 10,000 ap-

GUEST EDITORIAL continued on page 14

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A construction worker with a beard, wearing a white hard hat and a high-visibility yellow and blue safety vest, is focused on his work. He is wearing orange and black work gloves and is handling a fire hose. The background shows a construction site with various materials and a truck.

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Letters to the Editor

Thank You!

I want to thank you very much for publishing my story and sending the extra copies of the magazine. I have enough to give each of my 15 grandchildren, plus. I enjoyed writing the story as it brought back many great memories. I hope to hear from some of the culprits that were part of the journey. It came at a great time as I am getting ready to have a surgery to have a bypass in my leg to hopefully help me keep being able to walk and work for a few more years. It really gave me an attitude adjustment that got me in the right frame of mind.

I really appreciate what you and your magazine do for our industry.

Thank you again,

— Chuck Brown
Charles Brown Fire Sprinkler Design
Moreno Valley, CA

A Little Story...

I hope you and all my friends there are staying safe and healthy. I think of your Dad and you all often.

I wanted to tell you this little story. I just received my May edition of *FPC* and in reading an article by Chuck Brown, "How I got started in the Fire Sprinkler Industry," he mentioned that in his early years, among other things, he had remembered working part time for a (at that time) small hanger company and meeting someone named George. I had to smile because I do remember "Charlie" Brown then as a warm, very personable young fellow and good worker. It really warmed my heart that he remembered me after so many years.

I reached out to him today and, thanks to you, we have connected and will meet sometime soon to catch up. All thanks to you and *FPC*. This made my day.

Stay well old friend. All good things.

— George Von Gnatensky
TOLCO (retired)
tolcogvg@aol.com



Why FPC?

For over four decades, FPC has been committed to open-ended education within the automatic fire sprinkler industry.

Webster says "open-ended" is: 1. Not restrained by definite limits, restrictions, or structure, 2. Open or liable to change, 3. Indefinite or inconclusive, 4. Allowing for expansion or unstructured response <an open-ended question.>

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National

Special Interests Try to Block Fair and Open Competition

Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) voiced its strong opposition to North America's Building Trades Unions' (NABTU) filing of a lawsuit against President Donald Trump's administration, seeking to reinstate project labor agreement mandates on certain U.S. Department of Defense and General Service Administration construction contracts over \$35 million.

"NABTU's misguided decision to file a challenge against the Trump administration's lawful exemption from anti-competitive, union-favoring project labor agreement requirements on certain federal projects is a reminder that these spe-

cial interests are fearful of fair and open competition," said Kristen Swearingen, ABC Vice President of Government Affairs. "Instead, they prefer policies that put a thumb on the scales in their favor at the expense of hardworking taxpayers who suffer the impacts of these inflationary, discriminatory requirements.

"ABC supports the Trump administration's exemption of projects critical to America's national security from these rules," said Swearingen. "We urge the administration to take a step further and fully rescind former President Joe Biden's Executive Order 14063 implementing PLA mandates. This would erase any basis for NABTU's lawsuit, allowing all contractors – both union and nonunion – to compete on a level playing field. It would also be a huge win for government efficiency by saving taxpayers up to \$10 billion annually."

The Biden PLA mandate has been widely criticized by the construction industry, taxpayer watchdog, and lawmakers for needlessly inflating construction costs, delaying projects, and effectively steering contracts to unionized firms and union labor.

In an ongoing case, ABC filed suit in federal court to block this policy in March 2024. ABC has also supported federal contractor members in bid protests that resulted in a January 19 decision by the U.S. Court of Federal Claims declaring PLA mandates illegal and removing them from the solicitations the contractors were bidding on. ABC will consider legal options for defending the Trump administration's PLA mandate exemptions against NABTU's meritless lawsuit.

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National

Construction Job Openings

The construction industry had 248,000 job openings on the last day of March, according to an Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) analysis of data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey. JOLTS defines a job opening as any unfilled position for which an employer is actively recruiting. Industry job openings decreased by 38,000 last month and are down by 90,000 from the same time last year.

"Construction job openings continued to trend lower in March, a clear sign of **slowing industrywide demand** for labor," said ABC Chief Economist Anirban Basu. "Hiring activity was particularly weak for the month, with the 302,000 hires equivalent to just 3.6% of industrywide jobs – the lowest rate ever recorded.

"With quitting and layoff activity also subdued for the month, construction labor force churn is virtually nonexistent at the moment. *While a majority of contractors surveyed in March expect to increase their staffing levels over the next six months*, according to ABC's Construction Confidence Index, tariffs and other economic headwinds may blunt hiring expectations in the months to come."

For the Construction Backlog Indicator and Construction Confidence Index,

plus analysis of spending, employment, job openings, and the Producer Price Index, visit: www.abc.org/economics.

National

NFPA Doubles Regional Staff to Strengthen Support for Safety Professionals

The National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA®) has announced a significant expansion of its regional operations, doubling the number of field staff across the United States to better support professionals tasked with fire, life, and electrical safety. This move brings the regional team to 16 experts, including three focused exclusively on electrical safety.

For decades, NFPA regional staff have played a vital role in educating and supporting regulatory agencies, authorities having jurisdiction (AHJs), and others who use NFPA *Codes* and *Standards* to protect their communities. The team also works to raise awareness of NFPA tools, trainings, and digital solutions like NFPA LiNK® – resources designed to help both public and private sector professionals be more effective in their roles.

"Expanding the regional team reflects our ongoing commitment to the NFPA Fire & Life Safety Ecosystem™ and to the professionals who help activate it every day," said Lorraine Carli, NFPA Vice President for Outreach and Advocacy. "As the safety landscape becomes more

complex, our Regional Directors provide a direct line to NFPA support and insight, ensuring that businesses and communities have the knowledge and tools they need to reduce risk and save lives."

The new regional structure assigns Directors to smaller groups of states, allowing them to spend more time building relationships and addressing specific regional challenges. The team brings diverse experience across a broad scope of professions, including the fire service, engineering, public education, and building and electrical enforcement, offering significant expertise to help communities meet today's growing safety demands.

Last fall, NFPA hosted forums at its Massachusetts headquarters for fire marshals and building officials, where safety leaders from across North America echoed common challenges – lithium-ion battery fires, the growth in the number of tall buildings and large warehouses, cannabis facility hazards, and the increase in wildfires in places previously considered low-risk. The forums underscored the value of connecting stakeholders with NFPA Regional Directors who understand these issues firsthand and are equipped to provide real-world support. Participants left with a deeper understanding of the tools and expertise NFPA offers, including case studies of how Regional Directors can assist communities recover from major fire events.

To contact the NFPA Regional Director for your state, please refer to the list

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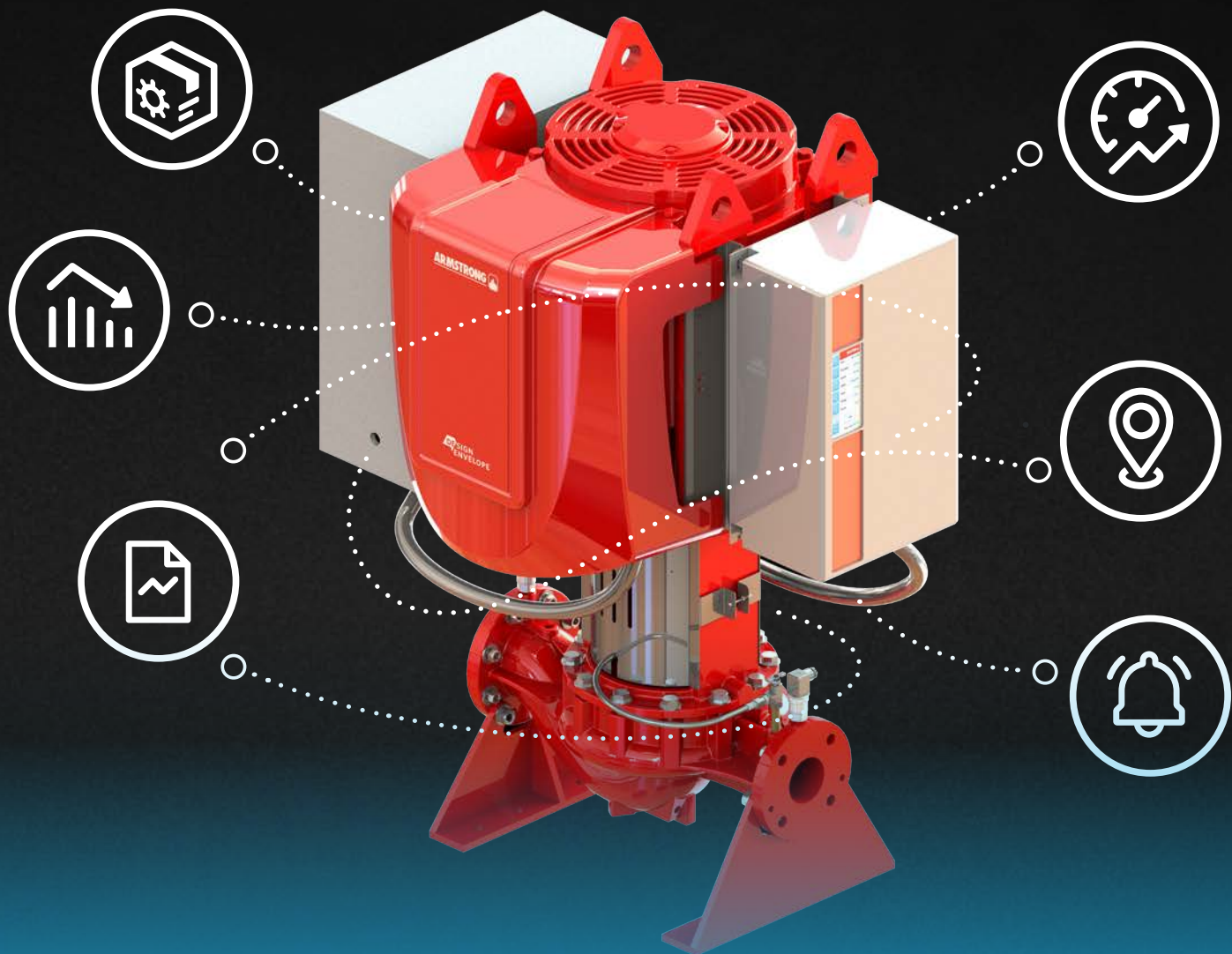
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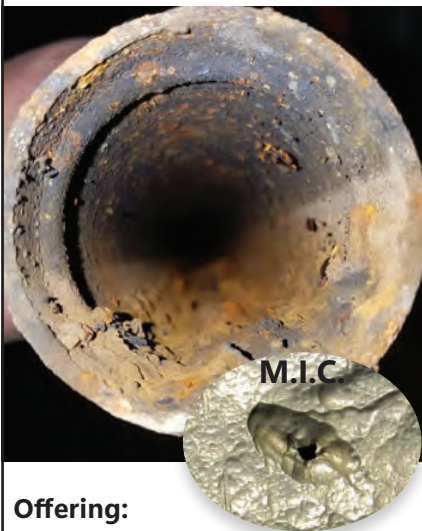


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About the National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA®): Founded in 1896, NFPA® is a global, self-funded, nonprofit organization devoted to eliminating death, injury, property, and economic loss due to fire, electrical, and related hazards. The Association delivers information and knowledge through more than 300 consensus codes and Standards, research, training, education, outreach, and advocacy; and by partnering with others who share an interest in furthering the NFPA mission.

For more information visit: www.nfpa.org.

Korea

Simplified Sprinkler Installation in Aging Rental Apartments

An article by Kim You-jin posted April 29, 2025, on www.biz.chosun.com, said Korea Land and Housing Corporation (LH) announced that it will proactively promote the installation of simplified sprinklers to enhance fire safety in aging permanent rental apartments.

Sprinkler systems are classified as effective for initial fire response; however, concerns about fire risk in aging dwellings without such systems have persisted due to the division of mandatory installa-

tion targets by the timing of related legal amendments.

LH prepared a “simplified sprinkler installation plan” last September to enhance fire safety for residents of aging permanent rental apartments. Recognizing the need for customized construction methods that fit the actual construction conditions since they are installed inside old dwellings, testing of simplified sprinklers was conducted by major types.

Major performance tests were also conducted. Collaborating with the Fire Department, firefighting technology Associations, and field experts, the expertise in performance testing was enhanced. According to LH, performance test results confirmed that installing simplified sprinklers allows for securing the golden time (3 to 5 minutes) for initial fire control.

This year, LH will prioritize the installation of simplified sprinklers in aging permanent rental apartments where vulnerable groups such as the elderly and disabled reside in large numbers. A total of 9,735 units in 97 permanent rental apartment complexes across the country, including those in Seoul’s Daebang, will be targeted, and the project will be carried out with 50% support from the national budget. It will be implemented alongside annual remodeling projects aimed at the complete improvement of unit interiors.

In addition, LH plans to form a council with internal and external fire safety experts to continue detailed reviews for the expansion of simplified sprinkler installation, not only in permanent rentals but also in other public rental dwellings like national rental housing.

LH President Lee Han-jun said, “Permanent rental apartments are home to a large number of elderly residents, so we decided to fully promote the installation of simplified sprinklers, which are effective for initial suppression and securing escape routes during fires. We will do our utmost to create a residential environment where residents can live with peace of mind.”

□

D-Day Thoughts...

“At the core, the American citizen soldiers knew the difference between right and wrong, and they didn’t want to live in a world in which wrong prevailed. So they fought, and won, and we, all of us, living and yet to be born, must be forever profoundly grateful.” — Author Stephen Ambrose



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The Value of Continuing Education

Quizzes for Experienced Project Managers and Installers

From Aegis Fire Protection, LLC

As a company committed to excellence in fire sprinkler installation, service, and inspection, we know that our experienced project managers and installers are the backbone of our success. Continuing education isn't just for those starting out in the trade – it's just as important for seasoned professionals. Quizzing current employees offers several key benefits: it reinforces critical safety practices, refreshes knowledge of codes and *Standards*, and ensures consistency

in our work across all job sites. It also creates an opportunity to share updated information or highlight recurring issues that we've noticed in the field.

The quiz isn't about catching anyone off guard – it's about supporting our team and keeping our skills sharp. When these quizzes are received positively, they become a tool for growth rather than a test of competence. That's why we encourage everyone to see this process as part of our shared commitment

to quality and safety. When employees feel the quiz is fair, relevant, and respectful of their experience, it builds trust and strengthens our company culture.

To implement the quiz effectively, it's important to set clear expectations. Let your team know why the quiz is being given, what topics it covers, and how the results will be used (for example, to guide future training or identify where clarification might be helpful). Allow time for questions and feedback, and, if possible, create a relaxed environment for taking the quiz – whether it's on paper, digitally, or during a scheduled team meeting. Most importantly, let your crew know that their knowledge and experience are valued, and this is just one more way we keep our standards high and our team even stronger.

About the Author:

For more information contact: Aegis Fire Protection, LLC, Corporate Office, 13415 W. 98th Street, Lenexa, KS 66215; Missouri Office, 305 South Kyler, Suite 511, Monett, MO 65708; (913) 825-0178, <http://youtube.com/c/AegisFireProtectionFireSprinklerFireAlarm>.

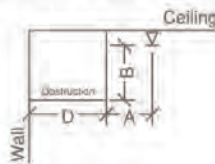
“The quiz isn't about catching anyone off guard...”

Standard Spray Sprinklers Obstruction Test

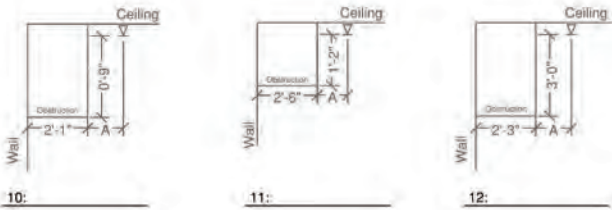
No questions apply to ESFR. No questions apply to sidewall sprinklers.
Sprinklers are quick response and standard heads.

Fill in the blank

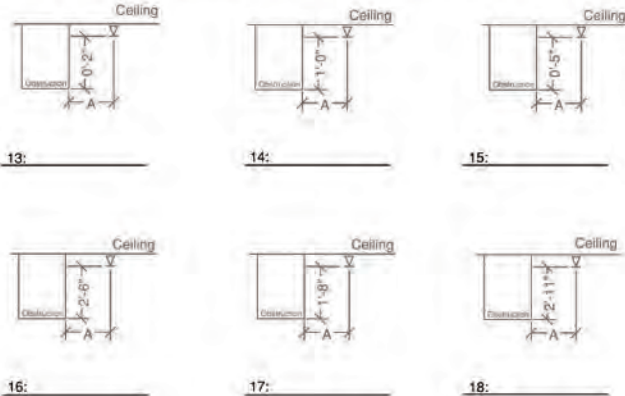
1. If an obstruction against a wall is _____ wide or _____, no additional protection is required under that obstruction.
2. Obstructions located against the wall and that are not over _____ in width shall be permitted to be protected in accordance with Figure 10.2.7.1.2(b).
3. Sprinklers shall be installed under fixed obstructions over _____ wide.
4. The deflector of automatic sprinklers installed under fixed obstructions shall be positioned no more than _____ below the bottom of the obstruction.
5. The clearance between the deflector and the top of storage shall be _____ or _____.
6. Sprinklers shall be permitted to be spaced on opposite sides of the obstruction not exceeding _____ in width, where the distance from the centerline of the obstruction to the sprinklers does not exceed _____ the allowable distance between sprinklers.
7. Sprinklers shall be permitted to be placed without regard to the blades of ceiling fans less than _____ in diameter, provided the plan view of the fan is at least _____ open.
8. What is the formula used to determine how far a sprinkler head needs to be away from an obstruction against the wall to be able to provide adequate fire sprinkler protection underneath the obstruction?



Use the formula from question 8 to solve for 'A' in questions 10-12.



Refer to the appropriate chart in NFPA 13 to determine the value of 'A' in questions 13-18



“To implement the quiz effectively, it’s important to set clear expectations.

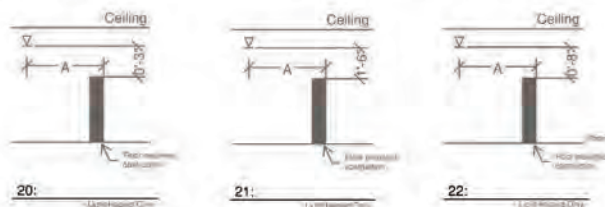
Let your team know why the quiz is being given, what topics it covers, and how the results will be used..”

Fill in the blank – Ceiling Pockets

19. Sprinklers shall not be required in ceiling pockets where all the following are met:

- The total volume of the unprotected ceiling pocket does not exceed _____
- The depth of the unprotected ceiling pocket does not exceed _____
- The entire floor under the unprotected ceiling pocket is protected by sprinklers at the _____ ceiling elevation.
- The total size of all unprotected ceiling pockets in the same compartment within _____ of each other does not exceed _____
- The unprotected ceiling pocket has noncombustible or _____ finishes.
- _____ sprinklers are utilized throughout the compartment.

Refer to the appropriate chart in NFPA 13 to determine the value of 'A' in questions 20-22

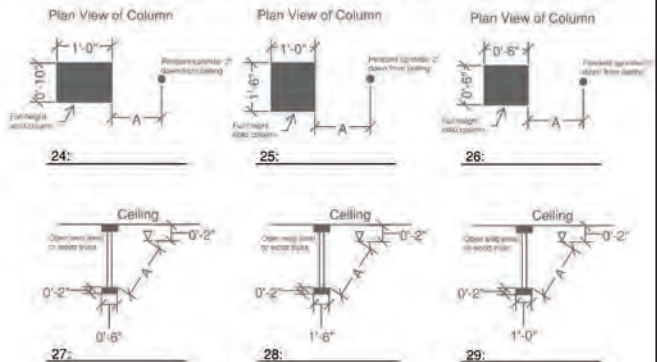


23. What is the formula used to determine the location of a sprinkler heads in relations to a vertical obstruction? _____

24. Sprinklers shall be permitted to be installed on the _____ of a truss or bar joist or directly above a beam, provided that the truss chord or beam dimension is not more than _____ and the sprinkler deflector is located at least _____ above the structural member and where the sprinkler is positioned at a distance _____ times greater than the maximum dimension of the web members away from the web members.

25. Sprinklers shall be permitted to be located _____ the distance between the obstructions where the obstruction consists of open trusses _____ or greater apart [_____ on center], provided that all truss members are not greater than _____ in width.

Use to the appropriate formula in NFPA 13 to determine the value of 'A' in questions 24-29



By completing this test, the taker agrees to hold the author harmless for any mental distress, frustration, or existential crises experienced during its completion.

prenticeship hours to attain journeyman-status (finishing with COSCO/Zurn Fire Protection Div., Seattle) in 1980. I feel quite comfortable conveying my experiences over those five years working around the country. As Brant puts it, I experienced both the “pros and cons – they do good and sometimes not.” Let me preface the following stories by stating that looking back, I very likely had a big chip on my shoulder resulting from my failure to be drafted into the NFL. I was ‘geared’ to that career from Pop Warner Football through high school and college. I was what was called a ‘blue chip’ athlete coming out of high school in the Los Angeles area, circa 1970.

I choose to start with the positives, the “pros.” Following my six-month probationary period, I was enrolled in the Pennsylvania State University (Penn State) Correspondence Program, which was basically quasi-college level courses through the mail, starting in 1975. This afforded me the opportunity of learning all areas of the sprinkler ‘trade’ aside from my daily doping pipe threads, threading pipes, packing the 6" and 8" Schedule 40 pipes. Keep in mind, I was the prodigal sprinkler ‘prototype’ apprentice (that being 6'-3" tall and 250 pounds). Or, as they used to put it: Size 48 shoulders, size 2 hat. While I was expected to do the “grunt work” (like every low-level apprentice), I was gaining a priceless education in the sprinkler industry. I will say that most of my foremen and fitters were more than willing to impart their knowledge to me. I got to see a lot of the country that I probably would not have seen outside of football. I worked two years on the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, with GRINNELL and Sentry Fire Protection (Fife, WA) based in Fairbanks, Alaska. Made a ton of money – even managed to save some of it!

Aside from making lifelong friends, colleagues, and professional contacts (nationwide), I was afforded the opportunity to study Fire Protection Engineering at the University of Maryland. This was made possible by multiple entities, support from Sentry Automatic Sprinkler and GRINNELL (summer jobs in Alaska), Sprinklerfitters Local 669, and, most importantly, John J. “Jack” Walsh, Director of the 669 Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee and longtime NFPA 13 Sprinkler Committee Member. My path would not have been achievable without the staunch support of Richard “Dick” Boulanger (Sentry), William J. “Wild Bill” Bennet (Superior Fire), and John P. Eidson, F.P.E. (COSCO Fire). Former 669 Business Manager Roy Pantell was invested in my career path. I finished my apprenticeship and promptly went to work for COSCO Fire in Gardena, California. Johnny Eidson hired me to work as a sales/engineer trainee, ostensibly under his father, the legendary Harold Eidson. Keep in mind all of this resulted from my Union affiliation. When I left ‘the field’ and moved into the office environment, I was able to successfully retrieve my monetary contributions (retirement, vacation funds, etc.) from 669. They hold onto my burial fund benefits to this day. Nearly all of my experiences with 669 were very positive, even when I dealt

with 669 Business Agent Jim Visger in Arizona in my capacity as General Manager of Advance Fire Protection Co. (Tucson). I would be remiss if I did not make mention of a fellow Union Member (Seattle Local 699) at “Automatic” Sprinkler Corp./ District 68 that taught me most of what I know about Special Hazards – Brother Jimmy Young. He was ASCOA’s special hazards expert for the entire West Coast military (U.S. Navy) bases. I was a Contract Representative (estimator) and Jimmy Young took me under his wing. I believe to this day it was because of my union affiliation and, I think, he grew to like me (he was no fan of the “suit and tie” guys). I hope I have presented a fair, impartial,

and comprehensive portrait as to why I remain ‘loyal’ to 669 to this day. I also take advantage of 669 training classes in both Albuquerque and Phoenix to maintain my licensure/CEUs with expert (Union) instructors.

Now to the “dark side” or “dishing dirt,” as they say. I preface the following remarks by stating implicitly that the few negative/con experiences during my apprenticeship were NOT the result of 669 per se. Like all institutions, it is the people/members of said institutions that can create problems for the entire organization. My first rude awakening (not too negative) was when our 669 Business Agent (BA) visited our jobsite at the U.S. Federal Building in the Tri-Cities area (Richland, WA). The project was a very large retrofit for the U.S. General Services Administration and adjacent Post Office, an existing high rise building. There were 10 or 12 fitters and apprentices manning the job and everyone convened to hear what the BA had to say. I remember one topic was how our employer was slow paying our designated benefits and that we, the members, should contact our Seattle office to complain about the ongoing ‘problem.’ Everyone sat mute until I posed the question, “Isn’t that your job?” I was a Grade 3 or 4 apprentice and my question was not well received by the BA or my fellow workers. Then again, the older, more experienced fitters may have thought I was correct and possibly even they should have asked the question. Who knows?

I was a Grade 2 apprentice working for GRINNELL in Fairbanks during the Trans-Alaska Pipeline (out of their Anchorage office). My foreman was Al Eberhardt and my TJ fitter was one Daniel Sims. Dan was a Grade 7 or 8 apprentice, but was able to draw “temporary journeyman” pay due to labor shortages in the Fairbanks region. Both men were from Spokane. I had worked with them for some four months out of the Anchorage area, on what would eventually become Alaska Governor Sarah Palin’s high school. We were within 50 miles of Anchorage so we only worked a straight 40-hour work week with no daily (\$35.00 tax-free) subsistence. Once we were dispatched to Fairbanks (over 100 miles out), we were able to work six days a week drawing double-time wages and the \$35.00 daily subsistence. Three or four weeks in, “Brother” Eberhardt came to me with a question, to wit: “How much did I clear in An-

“Now to the “dark side” or “dishing dirt,” as they say. I preface the following remarks by stating implicitly that the few negative/con experiences during my apprenticeship were NOT the result of 669 per se.”

chorage, versus what I was clearing in Fairbanks?” Strange question, I thought. We were still employed by GRINNELL and Al handed out our paychecks as the Area Foreman. I was clearing about \$400 per week more than the 40-hour shifts in Anchorage. He stated flat out, “Then you can give me and Dan \$100.00 per week each and you’ll still be making good pay (implying better than Anchorage). My response, “You’re kidding me, right?” Nope, he was serious. My initial response was shock and then, shortly thereafter, anger. I managed to stay composed, rather than resort to methods my late father would have gleefully endorsed. In the back of my mind was to pound him into the ground, but he was a longtime GRINNELL employee (“company man” would have been the applicable phrase). Also, as part of my indentured apprenticeship program, you could only be fired twice in the five-year process and you were then kicked out of the program. I got up nose-to-nose with him and told him what he could do to himself. He backed up and informed me I was terminated for lack of work, and to report back to the Anchorage office the following Monday (this was on payday Friday). Fortunately for me, Sentry Sprinkler immediately hired me to start on the following Monday. I used one of my two allowable reasons to quit a company. I could have reported the ‘extortion’ to the BA in Spokane, he was close friends with both men. I could have contacted my father at the L.A. offices, but then I would have been a ‘rat’ in some people’s view. Years later I would find myself competing with Brother Eberhardt in GRINNELL’S Spokane Office. He was a daywork estimator and I bid against him out of Seattle with ASCOA. I took every opportunity to rub it in when I got a job away from him. Years later I read his obituary in *FPC* magazine. The article was a nice piece about his sprinkler career with GRINNELL and he was a former Eagle Scout. Turns out, there was a Spokane apprentice waiting in line to get to Fairbanks (and the BIG MONEY). He started work with Al and Dan on the Monday I was to report back to Anchorage. Go figure...

It bears noting that our firm provides third-party PE/FPE reviews and designs for fire sprinkler contractors and fire alarm/special hazards contractors in several States – we do NOT draw a distinction between ‘signatory’ contractors and ‘merit-shop’ contractors. Since

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there are only two union contractors in all of New Mexico, we serve both union and non-union shops alike. My union ‘loyalty’ only goes so far!! After all, business is business, que no? Besides, I continue to pay my monthly dues.

About the Author:

Jerry D. Watts has owned and operated ACCENT Fire Engineering Int’l. Ltd. out of Santa Fe, New Mexico, for more than 30 years. Licensed in more than 10 States, ACCENT maintains a crew of three licensed Fire Protection and Mechanical Engineers, certified plans examiners, and several retired City, County, and State Fire Marshals. ACCENT proudly retains membership with the National Fire Sprinkler Association, American Fire Sprinkler Association (New Mexico Chapter), Society of Fire Protection Engineers, and National Fire Protection Association. They can be reached at: 800-503-1961.

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The Staffing Squeeze: *Solving the Gap in the Fire Sprinkler Industry*

By Diego Olmos, SET

Staffing has always been a challenge in the fire sprinkler industry, but in today's labor market, it's evolved into a full-blown crisis. As the owner of a fire sprinkler design and estimating business, I've watched the talent pool shrink, hiring timelines stretch, and workforce pressure mount.

Whether you're managing a design team or running field operations, the shortage of qualified professionals is putting real strain on our ability to deliver.

This short article shares what's working, what's not, and how we in the fire protection industry can move forward.

Understanding the Core Staffing Challenges

The key staffing challenges we face fall into three categories:

1. **Aging Workforce** – Experienced estimators, designers, and project managers are retiring faster than we can replace them, taking decades of institutional knowledge with them.
2. **Low Industry Awareness** – Most students and job seekers have never heard of fire sprinkler design. Competing trades like electrical and HVAC are more visible and widely promoted.
3. **Limited Specialized Talent** – Hiring for design and estimating requires a rare mix: NFPA knowledge, CAD or Revit skills, and ideally NICET certification. Qualified candidates are few and far between.

Where We're Looking – and What Works

Online Job Boards: Limited Returns – Indeed and LinkedIn generate many applications, but few with relevant experience. We've improved results by clearly listing technical requirements and expectations, but this remains best for entry-level roles.

Industry-Specific Recruiters – Staffing agencies that understand fire protection or MEP systems deliver more targeted candidates. While pricier, the time saved in screening makes it worthwhile for critical roles.

Trade schools and internships partnering with technical colleges has been a longer-term win. We've had success offering internships and shadowing opportunities. One former intern is now a full-time junior designer.

Building Talent Internally

The best long-term solution is to grow from within. A few internal practices that have worked for us:

- **Mentorship Programs** – Pairing new hires with experienced team members accelerates learning and strengthens team dynamics.
- **NICET Certification Support** – We pay for certification testing, provide prep materials, and allow paid study time. It shows employees we're invested in their future.
- **Clear Onboarding Materials** – Well-documented processes and training guides have helped us onboard faster and reduce early turnover.

Rethinking Recruitment Timing and Tactics

Instead of waiting until we're short-staffed, we've shifted to continuous recruiting. Some strategies include:

- **Industry Events** – Conferences, training seminars, and code update meetings can be great places to connect with potential candidates.
- **Employee Referrals** – Offering small referral bonuses has helped surface great talent from within our team's networks.
- **Remote and Hybrid Models** – For design and estimating, we've embraced remote work. A NICET-certified designer in another state can still contribute meaningfully, thanks to cloud-based tools.

Advice for the Industry

- **Promote the Profession** – We need to show that this is meaningful, stable work. Fire protection saves lives. That message should be part of our recruitment.
- **Train for Potential** – If a candidate has the aptitude, we can teach the skills. Structured development pathways are essential.
- **Collaborate Across the Industry** – Partner with trade associations and schools to raise awareness and build a better pipeline into the industry.

Final Thoughts

Staffing in the fire sprinkler industry is tough – but solvable. The companies that will succeed are those that invest in training, develop internal talent, and think strategically about recruitment. We need to stop waiting for perfect candidates and start building them. By doing so, we're not just solving staffing problems, we're strengthening the future of the fire protection industry.

About The Author:

Diego Olmos, SET, is the CEO/Owner of Fuego Fire Sprinkler Design, located in Atlanta, Georgia. He has over 25 years of specialized technical acumen encompassing the full spectrum of fire sprinkler systems, from design and hydraulic calculations to cost estimation and risk management. Olmos is also an avid technical writer and trainer of design, and inspection, testing, and maintenance programs of fire sprinkler systems. He is an active participant in NPFA, AFSA, SFPE, and other Associations that bring awareness of life safety systems to the public through education. He holds several certifications such as NICET IV in Automatic Fire Sprinkler System Layout, PMP, and is a graduate from St. Mary's University.

For more information contact: Fuego Fire Sprinkler Design, 3291 Coachmans Way NE, Roswell, GA 30075; (678) 622-2842, www.Fuegofiredesign.com.

Staffing Issues and Challenges *for Fire Sprinkler Contractors*

By Eduardo Lopez

Hiring and retaining qualified staff has always been a challenge in the fire protection industry, but in recent years, the pressure has only increased. For fire sprinkler contractors, staffing isn't just about filling a position – it's about maintaining the operational and technical excellence that the life safety business demands. As a contractor myself, I have seen first-hand the evolving challenges, the risks of poor staffing decisions, and the creative solutions that have helped companies survive and thrive.

I don't know about you, but we've had a high turnover of engineers over the last 10 years. The core group of engineers with 15 years or more experience has remained the same for the past 10 years. It's necessary to prepare the next generation of the company.

Biggest Problems and Concerns in Staffing

One of the biggest concerns today is simply finding qualified candidates. The pool of trained fire sprinkler designers, fitters, inspectors, and project managers is limited, especially when considering the requirements of codes like NFPA 13 and FM Global. Compounding this shortage, many seasoned professionals are nearing retirement, while younger generations are either unaware of or uninterested in careers in fire protection. Remember that we are in the transition to the next generation, it's up to us to recruit the next generation.

Another major issue is training and retention. Hiring someone new is only part of the battle. It often takes six months to a year to get a new employee fully up to speed on company-specific practices, project expectations, and safety protocols. Losing someone after investing all that time is a costly setback – one that most contractors can't afford to repeat. In the last four years we have lost around six already trained engineers.

Where to Go for Reliable Staffing Solutions

Recruiting has been difficult. Young people don't want to sit for eight hours, nor do they want to be locked in an office. We understand that our environment requires a specific profile for design engineers.

We don't recruit engineers from other companies; we believe it's unethical. We prefer to seek out newly graduated engineers to begin working on fire protection systems. This poses a problem because the learning curve is very steep. It means teaching new engineers from scratch.

It's in our DNA to do this rather than recruit from other companies. On the other hand, the people who have come to us have experienced what we don't want to do: they've been recruited by other companies. This is where I sometimes wonder if it's a good thing or not. What I do understand is that it's a solution to the problem. At the moment we are only looking at universities and local job boards.

Effective Systems and Processes for Hiring

It's been helpful to have a Recruiting Department with a psychologist who helps us filter through the personnel selection process. Before this, we hired engineers, but they didn't last long. At least now they last longer.

During the selection process, several in-person interviews are conducted, and after these, technical and drawing interviews follow. This is where we have the second selection process, where we evaluate the understanding and use of drawing tools such as AutoCAD and Revit. We understand that all of this can be taught, and it's difficult for candidates to possess this knowledge. If you have it, it's an advantage and shortens the learning curve.

Timing and Focus of the Search for New Employees

Timing is everything in staffing. In my experience, **waiting until you're desperate** to hire is a **recipe for poor decisions**. We focus our recruiting efforts year-round, not just when we have immediate openings. Attending trade school job fairs, sponsoring local technical competitions, and maintaining a visible presence on LinkedIn have helped create a pipeline of potential candidates.

When looking for new employees, I also focus beyond just technical skills. **Attitude, commitment** to safety, and **willingness** to learn are non-negotiables. Technical knowledge can be taught; integrity and work ethic cannot. These last points are very important. We believe the technical aspect is the easiest part of staff development, but attitude and disposition don't depend on us, it depends on them.

Conclusion

Staffing will always be a challenge for fire sprinkler contractors, but with proactive strategies, strong internal processes, and a commitment to long-term employee development, it's a challenge we can meet.

Incorporating a wellness and integration component into our training process is essential. While some employees may leave for better salaries, many others leave because of how they are treated.

In the end, we are not just hiring employees – we are building the future of life safety. Every fitter, designer, or inspector we bring into our teams carries the responsibility of protecting lives and property. Hiring well isn't optional; it's part of the mission.

About the Author:

Eduardo Lopez is a licensed engineer (NICET #130312, CFPS 4229, CETRACI S03983714) with Baja Design Engineering in Mexicali, Baja California. He may be reached at: Office: +52 (686) 905-9855, Cell (427) 290-9839, elopez@bajadesign.com.mx.

AFSA Empowers Designers with Design School Scholarship

Design school scholarships are now available from the Bill Phair Design School Scholarship Program, established by the American Fire Sprinkler Association (AFSA). This program offers financial assistance to AFSA contractor members in Categories 1-3, helping to train fire sprinkler layout technicians within their design departments. Scholarships are available for both AFSA Beginning and Intermediate Design Schools, providing valuable opportunities for professional development.

This program provides a limited number of scholarships to help employees attend the Beginning and Intermediate Design Schools. Eligible AFSA members can nominate an employee to apply. Each scholarship covers registration fees and assists with travel expenses – including airfare, hotel, and meals – for one of AFSA’s 2025 design school sessions. Applications are submitted online and include questions for both the contractor and designer. The total value of each scholarship is \$4,500.

AFSA’s Beginning Design School presents a comprehensive, practical approach to preparing fire sprinkler system drawings. This class is designed for trainees and entry-level technicians with at least six months of experience as well as those with experience in the sprinkler trade looking to make the transition to system layout.

Experienced layout technicians will find AFSA’s Intermediate Design School useful to understand the tools they utilize in depth and gain a deeper knowledge of layout standpipe, fire pump, seismic protection, and the design requirements for general storage. This class is designed for competent trainees and technicians with at least one year of system layout experience. No prior Hydratec or Autodesk® Revit® experience is required. Students should be computer literate.

An exciting addition to AFSA’s design school curriculum is the incorporation of AFSA’s new training lab.

“AFSA’s new valve lab is invaluable for all kinds of training, including sprinkler system design,” says AFSA Director of Operations and Training Joshua McDonald, MSET, CFPS, CWBSP, WBITM. “Discussing water flow testing is one thing – our students actually perform and analyze it. NFPA 13’s obstruction diagrams come to life as participants witness actual spray patterns with and without obstructions. This dynamic facility is versatile and constantly evolving to meet our industry needs.”

AFSA’s design school scholarships are only for contractor members in the Tier 1-3 categories.

For more information and to apply visit: www.firesprinkler.org/designscholarship. For any questions e-mail: scholarships@firesprinkler.org. For more information on Beginning Design School visit: www.firesprinkler.org/design. For details on Intermediate Design School, visit: www.firesprinkler.org/nextlevel.

Established in 1981, the American Fire Sprinkler Association is an international Association representing fire sprinkler contractors. AFSA is dedicated to the educational and professional advancement of the automatic fire sprinkler industry. To learn more visit: www.firesprinkler.org.

AFSA Educates Students, Awards Scholarships

While Increasing Awareness of Fire Sprinklers

The American Fire Sprinkler Association (AFSA) is proud to provide two scholarship contests: the High School Senior Contest and Second Chance Contest. Aimed at raising awareness about fire safety and supporting students’ educational futures, each contest awards five \$1,000 scholarships.

The 2025 Second Chance Contest is now open. Applicants must read a passage about fire sprinklers that covers their history, how they function to protect lives and property, and the various career opportunities within the industry. After reading, participants will take an eight-question reading comprehension test. For each correct answer, applicants earn one entry – up to a maximum of eight entries – into a random drawing for a chance to win. Eligible applicants include high school graduates who wish to continue their education in trade school or graduate school. Enter at: <https://www.afsascholarship.org/secondchance>. The deadline is August 31.

AFSA is pleased to announce the winners of its 2025 High School Senior Scholarship Contest: Angelie Dykes, Dyersburg, TN; Stephen Phillips, Wyoming, PA; Kennedy Quast, Layton, UT; Mia Scheidler, St. Joseph, MO; Samantha Springer, Bismarck, ND.

The High School Senior Contest is open exclusively to high school seniors. To enter, applicants must complete the online entry form online for a chance to be selected in a random drawing. Only one entry per student is allowed, and five winners will each receive a \$1,000 scholarship. The 2026 contest will open September 1, 2025, and end January 1, 2026. Current high school juniors are encouraged to bookmark <https://www.afsascholarship.org/high-school-contest> and enter this contest when it opens for the 2025-2026 school year.

AFSA is committed to educating students about fire safety while easing the financial burden of higher education. Since 1996, the Association has awarded over a quarter of a million dollars in scholarships, supporting students nationwide in achieving their educational goals. Through these scholarships, AFSA aims to empower students to succeed and raise awareness about the life-saving importance of fire sprinklers, especially among those who may not fully recognize the importance of fire safety.

For more details or to apply for the Second Chance Scholarship Contest or the High School Seniors College Scholarship Contest visit: www.afsascholarship.org.

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“It’s Design’s Fault.”

By Matthew J. Willis

If I had just one penny for every time I heard this, I would be writing this article from a privately owned beach with an umbrella drink in my hand, and not much else.

Over my years in our industry, I have had a chance to evaluate this statement from all sides of the coin. And I have concluded: this statement is 100% true. It is ultimately design’s fault for the product that is produced.

That caused me to wonder; why is this so? I don’t know exactly how many fire sprinkler designers there are on this planet, but I have had the opportunity to know and work with and train a large number of them. To a person they are extremely dedicated, intelligent, and passionate people. So how could all of these professionals be responsible for repeatedly and seemingly producing the same mistakes over and over? To fully understand the answer, it is important to know exactly what it is and what it takes to produce a qualified, self-operating fire sprinkler designer, and what is required for them to be successful.

This process takes years of time and a lot of money. The learning curve is very steep, and, in this day and time, operating at the speed of business makes it even more difficult. I know there is a concern about spending all this time and money only to have the designer move to a different job offering. While this is true, I have found it to be the exception and not the norm.

The first part of this consideration and process is, did we equip the designer with the tools and knowledge required? In this modern age, everything is done with computers and highly sophisticated software. I understand – we are all conscious of costs associated with advanced computers and software. But if we consider the costs of a designer’s pay, the difference of savings in lost time working with less than adequate equipment costs us far more per year than the equipment and software itself. So, we should be mindfully conscious of this as we consider these costs.

Then there is the question of knowledge. If we think about this, designers are required to learn a large variety of things in a highly compressed schedule. Among these are a new language, highly sophisticated software, constructability, codes and *Standards* and their relationship to each other, and the list goes on. The traditional method of bringing in someone from the field with a couple of years’ experience helps with a few of these items. But more and more we are bringing on completely green individuals with, in many cases, a level of higher education. This produces an even greater upfront cost. But the returns are

well worth the price of admission.

How do we train these individuals? What is the best approach? Do we hand new designers a computer and a copy of NFPA 13 and expect them to learn it? In my early days of training there were not very many resources to help with this. The learning was one on one. Today there are great organizations and even schools specifically dedicated to help cut the training time way down. While the cost of participation and the use of these may seem high, I cannot stress enough how beneficial they are! Will we ever close the gap that exists between the designer and the field? I don’t think so. And honestly, I hope not. I think some level of accountability is very healthy.

There are measures and steps that we can take to close this gap. Are you a foreman that consistently gripes about the designer running the pipe into the steel? Or did you sit down and explain to the designer how they were hitting the steel and what steps to take to avoid it? I often say that meetings are one of the more inefficient things that we do, but I don’t say they are not beneficial. Because they are.

To that end, there are a couple of meetings that you can hold that produce not only great training for the designer, but far better results for your bottom line.

The first is a job turnover meeting. Have the designer and foreman sit down together and go over the project. The designer can explain their approach and why, while also identifying any areas of concern.

The next meeting to have is after the job is installed. Do like the military and have an after-action report. Go over what worked. Go over what did not work. To a person, the designer craves this feedback. It can’t be over-emphasized how beneficial this training is for the designer. Remember, many of these young designers have never even held a tape measure much less a wrench.

How about a drawing review? A big part of my training was my mentor reviewing my drawing, redlining, and then going over it with me. Do you take the time to fully review the designer’s drawing and then sit down and go over the observations with them? I realize this takes time, but it is highly effective in producing a successful designer. I always tell my new designers, “You are here to learn. I am not here to teach you.” Once they fully understand this concept, their learning becomes even greater.

When I am asked a question by a new designer, my response is always the same: “That is an excellent question! What does

“...there are a couple of meetings that you can hold that produce not only great training for the designer, but far better results for your bottom line.”

the book say?" I require my new designers to come with a solution to a problem they are asking about. I also require them to come with the book open to the appropriate section. This gives you insight into how they arrived at the decision they made, which helps you finetune the training to each different individual. Remember, every person learns differently.

Next, did we give the designer everything they need to make decisions and produce a working design? I am speaking of construction documents – a full set of drawings, not the five pages that were used to estimate the project. If the designer does not have this information, how can we then expect them to make proper decisions? It is imperative, even at the speed that we operate, to get this information. Many times, we are in such a rush that we force the designer to rush out a design with limited information. This normally results in a very upset labor superintendent and/or job foreman.

How about background files? Did we just get the reflected ceiling plan to use in the software? Then the designer just starts putting circles in squares? While it may seem like a waste of time, let's keep in mind folks, much of this stuff is done in 3D today. Having these files loaded into the software will allow the designer to make informed decisions on a global level. So please do not just dismiss the importance of getting everything we can for the designer. We are paying for these expensive computers and software. We might as well use them.

Lastly, and this one is the most important one, did we equip the designer with the time to do the job properly? Did the designer have time to thoroughly review the construction documents? Were they able to spend time and drill down into the

details, study the elevations of the steel and ductwork so they can make decisions on where and how high to run the pipe? Or did we throw them a design, tell them it is hot, and expect them to produce something in a couple of weeks?

Do we hand a foreman a new job with 300 heads and tell them it must be roughed in in one week? Sure, it might/can be done. But are there going to be any mistakes and/or leaks? So why would we expect anything different when we rush a designer to do their job?

So yeah, it is ultimately the designer's fault. But why? The words of the great Sun Tzu keep ringing in my head: "If words of command are not clear and distinct, if orders are not thoroughly understood, the General is to blame. But if his orders ARE clear, and the soldiers nevertheless disobey, then it is the fault of their officers."

Simply put. We as Managers are solely responsible and accountable for the success or failure of our soldiers (read - designers), and not the soldiers themselves.

About the Author:

Matthew Willis is an Engineering Manager for Ferguson Fire Design, a wholly owned subsidiary of Ferguson Fire and Fabrication. He has over 30 years of combined fire sprinkler experience in the field and in design. He is a former U.S. Navy Firefighter and Shipboard Fire Marshal. He also serves as a Committee Member for NFPA 170, *Standard for Fire Safety and Emergency Symbols*. He may be reached at: matthew.willis1@ferguson.com.

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Avoiding the Three Most Common and Costly Fire Equipment Inspection Pitfalls

By Amanda Suffer

Fire protection contractors operate in a high-stakes environment where adherence to regulations and proper procedures are critical to avoiding costly legal and financial repercussions. Moreover, a robust inspection and deficiency management program is essential to building a resilient and highly valuable company. Top contractors focus on inspection-related work, rather than break/fix or on-demand work, to maximize profit and recurring revenue. Recent industry research by Markets & Markets shows that proactive inspection, testing, and maintenance of *installed* fire and life safety systems represents just over 51% of total revenue generated in the global fire and life safety services market. Our research shows that top-performing contractors increasingly prioritize inspection-based work to grow their business.

In this article, I'll discuss some typical pitfalls contractors face when building a successful inspection-related operation. I'll also share proven steps to help avoid these issues while streamlining the inspection processes. Let's dive in.

Pitfall #1: Relying on Last Year's Inspection Report

Using an outdated inspection report or relying on findings from the previous year when conducting current inspections can introduce significant risks. Fire protection codes, such as those established by the NFPA (National Fire Protection Association), mandate that inspection, testing, and maintenance (ITM) reports must reflect real-time evaluations of a system's condition. Duplicating information from past reports does not guarantee that the system is adequately assessed and that deficiencies are documented according to current standards.

“Our recent Fire Contractor Industry Benchmark Report shows that top-performing contractors report that 19.5% of all work orders are pull-throughs. Pull-through work includes repairs, upgrades, replacements, and installations from recorded deficiencies.”

Best Practices:

- Reduce the temptation to begin new inspections with last year's report. Be sure techs always have access to the most current, clean inspection forms.
- Utilize a service platform that automatically populates current customer, location, and specific asset data to shortcut data entry and guide technicians through the entire ITM process.
- Provide historical deficiency information to technicians to inform them of past problem areas.
- Ensure inspection forms and report outputs are linked to relevant NFPA code references for precise documentation.

Impact: Making it easy and efficient for techs to use only current, official inspection forms ensures the most accurate inspections. Inspections based on the latest and most accurate forms limit liability for you and your customer and ensure that fire protection assets operate safely and appropriately.

Pitfall #2: Improper Documentation and Communication of Deficiencies

While the responsibility to rectify deficiencies ultimately lies with the property owner, commercial service contractors must ensure that all deficiencies are documented, communicated to their customer, and monitored to shield them from legal liability. In some cases, deficiencies and repairs must also be reported to the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ).

Best Practices:

- Utilize technology to streamline deficiency reporting as technicians perform inspections through a defined checklist.
- Utilize advanced technology and tools to share photos, videos, and audio notes within inspection reports to educate building owners and operators about deficiencies and risks.
- Don't miss the opportunity to repair deficiencies to keep commercial facilities safe and increase repair revenue.

Impact: Regular inspections, streamlined workflows, complete deficiency reporting, and pull-through repair work help secure recurring revenue. An efficient inspection, reporting, and mitigation program can nurture trust and long-term customer relationships. Furnishing customers with detailed, branded inspection reports that showcase compliance or deficiencies with code and industry *Standards* can also help you win additional upgrade, repair, and maintenance contracts in the future.

Pitfall #3: Ensure Contracts Include Complete Terms & Conditions (Ts&Cs)

All service contracts have Ts&Cs, but some critical clauses can be easily overlooked. For example, fire protection contractors frequently disregard a *waiver of subrogation*. This vital clause protects your business because it shields you from potential lawsuits by insurance companies in case of a fire or other incidents. Devoid of a waiver of subrogation, an insurance company could seek to recover damages by suing the contractor if they suspect that equipment failure, poor installation, or inadequate maintenance contributed to an incident or claim. Be sure your service platform automatically attaches up-to-date Ts&Cs to contracts, inspection reports, and other artifacts. These precautions can substantially decrease exposure to expensive legal disputes.

Best Practices:

- Ensure that the terms and conditions encompass a waiver of subrogation to prevent insurers from litigating against your company in the event of a fire or related incident.
- Select a commercial services platform that simplifies the attachment of Ts&Cs, inspection reports, photos, and other artifacts to work orders for further protection.

Impact: Steering clear of lawsuits' legal and financial repercussions is integral to overall business health. Avoiding these situations helps uphold your company's reputation, improve operational efficiency, and preserve capital resources. By incorporating a waiver of subrogation, you can protect yourself against unnecessary legal expenses, time-consuming disputes, and potential harm to your brand.

Your Inspection Process Is Foundational To Revenue Growth and Top Valuations

As a commercial fire protection service contractor, you specialize in intricate inspections, code requirements, and identifying liability risks. By steering clear of some of the most common pitfalls, you can diminish risk for your customers and safeguard your business. Our recent *Fire Contractor Industry Benchmark Report* shows that top-performing contractors report that 19.5% of all work orders are pull-throughs. Pull-through work includes repairs, upgrades, replacements, and installations from recorded deficiencies. These top pull-through performers grow 2x faster than those without an efficient inspection operation. Inspection business, done right, can help you achieve more balanced and predictable revenue streams, increasing long-term profitability, resilience in economic headwinds, and growth. Strong recurring revenue models derived from inspections and deficiency mitigation are attractive to owners, investors, shareholders, and potential acquirers.

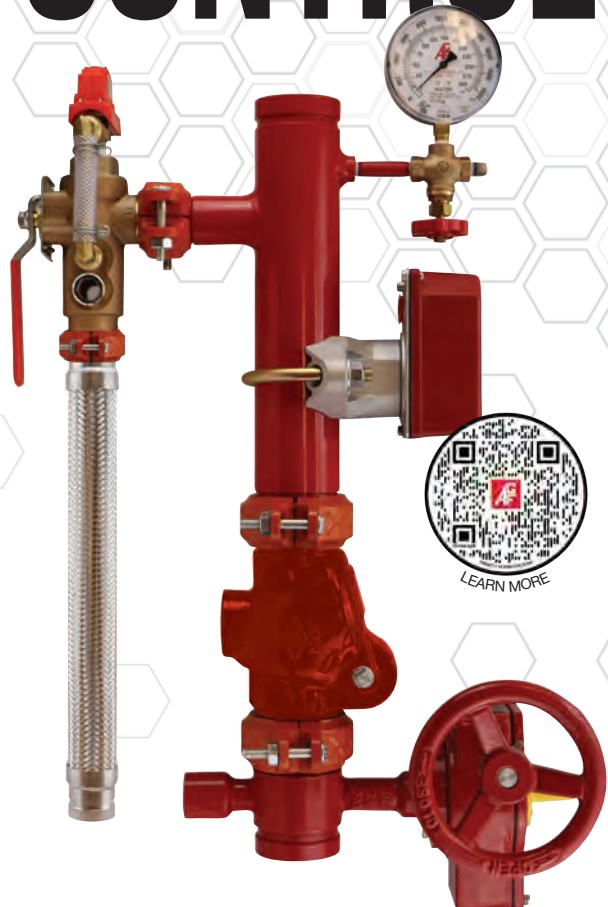
Sources: Markets & Markets; ServiceTrade

About the Author:

Amanda Sutter is VP of Product Management at ServiceTrade. She works to ensure product strategy and development aligns with the customer's needs, helping commercial fire and life safety and mechanical service contractors accelerate growth, enhance profitability, and deliver unparalleled service to their customers.

For more information visit: www.servicetrade.com, (919) 246-9900.

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We've Been Hacked!

By Russ Leavitt

For the second time in the past six years, our company was the victim of a cyberattack. Many of you have had similar experiences. This latest incursion was not as devastating as the first but still created problems and caused disruptions to our operations. As in 2019, the attackers demanded a ransom to be paid to give us the “key” to release their hold. It is interesting to see how things have evolved with these criminals – and yes, criminal is the correct term.

Through our consultants and legal team our insurer assigned to us, we learned that it is organized crime that, in our case, involved a central organization that has “franchises” to whom they provide the tools for attacking systems. Just like any franchised business structure, the central business receives a commission from every ransom obtained by their franchisees.

I want to share a bit about our experience and what we have learned. This is not meant to be official advice or consulting on my part. I am simply passing along information that you might find useful in preparing for and surviving an attack on your business or organization. One thing that is painfully true about dealing with these perpetrators: it is much like playing a game of “whack-o-mole.” As soon as a protective fix is developed by the industry, they are hard at work finding ways to defeat what is put into place.

The attack in 2019 shut our business down. Our accounting system, e-mail platforms, ERP, and other systems were disabled or corrupted. A ransom of \$250,000 was demanded to release their hold. We did not pay, and our IT staff worked day and night to make us whole. We contacted the FBI who had a key that worked in releasing the ransomware, which allowed us to focus on building protections into our system to thwart future attacks. We were fortunate to be down for only a few days. Others have had their systems corrupted and it took months before they could do tasks such as preparing invoices for customers.

In addition to working with IT consultants to install protective measures, we bought insurance to protect against future economic loss from cyber incursions. Our insurance provides several million dollars of coverage to pay for correct actions including ransoms. Unfortunately, in many cases it is easiest

to pay the ransom rather than to try and rebuild systems. This becomes a business decision. One thing to keep in mind is that the intruders typically honor their commitment to release their hold upon payment. If they do not, companies or their insurers would stop paying ransoms if the quid-pro-quo is not honored.

The attack on our company earlier this year was much less widespread. Most of the protections we had put into place worked but the attackers were able to obtain project, customer, and employee files, and other potentially sensitive information. They threatened to post the information on the dark web if we did not succumb

to their demands. The original demand was a ransom of \$2.7M. I was surprised to find that insurers use trained hostage negotiators to deal with the perpetrators. The negotiations went on for several weeks, which surprised everyone. This process gave us time to rebuild information and install updated protection. I will not go through all the tactics used by the negotiator but in the end, we got through this with minimal financial impact on our company.

Regarding disclosure, we notified our customers and employees of the attack and the threats. Our customers, who include many Fortune 100 companies, and with the exception of two large financial institutions, were not concerned with the breach and the possible posting of information. I believe it is because they have all had similar attacks, understand the challenges, and felt that there was no information about which they were sensitive. In addition, we purchased protection for our current and former employees. In the end, all the costs we incurred were covered by our insurer apart from the latest protective measures that we put into place.

In the end, with the hard work of our internal IT team working with our insurer and their resources, we survived this attack.

A few things to consider for your business:

- Buy cyber insurance. It is relatively inexpensive and will not only save you money, but your insurer brings cyber experts and legal assistance that is invaluable.
- Make the investment to protect your systems now and going forward. Be as proactive as possible. We had most of our data to the cloud but still had a number of old servers that were vulnerable to an attack.

“They threatened to post the information on the dark web if we did not succumb to their demands.”

OTHER VOICES is FPC’s opinion piece section; FPC welcomes all voices, viewpoints, and opinions on matters concerning fire sprinkler contracting and the fire sprinkler industry!

- Do not get lazy with passwords. Our system forces us to change every 90 days and use comprehensive passwords using at least three of the following: uppercase, lowercase, special character, and number. It is annoying but a simple item that can thwart someone finding multiple access points.
- Do not open any attachments or click on any links of which you are not absolutely sure of the source.

These are simple items and you may already have procedures in place, but it does not hurt to have a reminder.

Remember – it is not a matter of “if” you will be subjected to a cyberattack but “when.” With protection, you will not even know that the attacks occurred and were defeated. Learn from those of us who know from experience, incorporate best practices and do everything reasonable to keep you and your business safe!

About the Author:

Russ Leavitt is the Executive Chairman of Telgian Holdings. With over 40 years of experience, he holds a Level IV certification from NICET in Fire Sprinkler Layout and Certified Fire Protection Specialist (CFPS) designation. He is a Board Member and Chair of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), and the Chair of the NFPA 13 Sprinkler System Discharge Criteria technical committee. He also serves on the NFPA 13 Installation committee, as well as the NFPA 3, NFPA 4, and NFPA 25 technical committees. Russ conducts seminars internationally on a variety of fire and life safety related subjects and has authored a number of articles and training materials.

For more information visit: www.telgian.com.

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George Stewart has joined the growing AGF Manufacturing engineering team.

George brings with him a wealth of engineering experience across a diverse range of industries and a strong track record of developing specialized equipment and systems. He began his career at Gamajet/Alfa Laval, where he worked his way up through the engineering department. There, he focused on designing advanced tank cleaning machines and systems used in a wide range of industrial applications.

His career then took him to National Foam, where he specialized in high-flow and high-expansion foam firefighting systems, deepening his expertise in fire protection technologies. Most recently, George worked with Coherent, where he engineered silicon carbide components for use in space optics, contributing to cutting-edge advancements in aerospace technology.

“Each step in my career has been a unique experience, and I’ve had the chance to work on some really fascinating and technically challenging projects,” said George. “But I’m especially excited to be here at AGF, where innovation, reliability, and customer-focused solutions are at the core of what we do.”

AGF is thrilled to welcome George aboard and looks forward to the knowledge and passion he brings to his role. His well-rounded background in mechanical design and systems engineering makes him a valuable asset as AGF continues to expand its product offerings and enhance support for contractors,

engineers, and distributors in the fire protection industry.

For more information about AGF and its team visit: www.agfmfg.com

Gary Moore, Executive Vice President and Chief Revenue Officer, Victaulic®, retired at the end of April after 37 years of distinguished service with the company. **Mark Gilbert**, currently Vice President and General Manager for Europe, Middle East, and Africa, as well as Vice President in the U.S., will succeed Moore as Executive Vice President of Sales, effective May 1, 2025.

“Gary Moore has had as much to do with Victaulic’s growth over the last 20 years as anyone,” said Victaulic Chairman John Malloy. “His greatest legacies are the Victaulic sales organization as it stands today, the leadership of this organization, and the careers Gary has created for such a talented group of individuals.”

Moore began his career with Victaulic in 1988 as a sales representative in Canada. Through his exceptional performance and leadership, he advanced through various roles, including Vice President of Sales, Vice President & General Manager, and President of Victaulic Company of Canada, Limited. Moore then joined the executive leadership team at World Headquarters in Easton, Pennsylvania, to lead the global sales organization. He was named Executive Vice President and Chief Revenue Officer in 2023. Throughout his tenure, Moore has been instrumental in driving revenue growth and product innovation.

Moore has been an active leader within the construction industry, serving as the National Director of the Mechanical Contractors Association of Canada’s Supplier Council. He has also been involved with the MCAA Manufacturer Supplier Council in the U.S. for 22 years, including five years on the Board of Directors and serving as Chairman in 2009.

“It has been the privilege of my professional life to serve Victaulic for nearly four decades,” said Moore. “I’m incredibly proud of what our team has accomplished in expanding our global presence

and developing innovative solutions that have transformed the construction industry. The relationships built with customers, partners, and especially my Victaulic colleagues have been the most rewarding aspect of my career. I’m confident that Mark’s leadership will take the company to even greater heights, and I look forward to seeing Victaulic’s continued success in this next chapter.”

Mark Gilbert brings over 30 years of Victaulic experience to his new role. After graduating from Purdue University, he joined Victaulic as a sales representative in the Baltimore/Washington, D.C. area. His career has included positions as Regional Manager, West Coast Division Manager, Director for the Middle East Region in Dubai, and Vice President of Europe, Middle East, Africa, and India in Belgium, and, adding for the last two years, Vice President in the U.S.

“Mark’s extensive knowledge of our business, coupled with his proven ability to work cross-functionally, positions him well to continue our tradition of excellence while forging new paths to market leadership,” said Richard A. Bucher, Ph.D., President and CEO of Victaulic. “We are confident in his ability to build upon the strong foundation that Gary has established.”

Gilbert stated, “I’m committed to progressing Victaulic’s industry leadership while delivering exceptional value to our customers worldwide. By leveraging our team’s collective expertise and fostering an environment of innovation, we will continue to develop unique and efficient solutions that advance our market-focused partnerships and strategic global growth.”

About Victaulic: Since 1919, Victaulic’s innovative solutions and design services continue to increase construction productivity and reduce risk, ensuring projects are completed safely, on time and within budget. With more than 5,500 global employees, 900 sales representatives and 50 international facilities, Victaulic helps customers in over 140 countries succeed in the global construction industry. Learn more about how our solutions engineer confidence into every build at: www.victaulic.com.



James Golinveaux has been elevated to the role of Chairman of the Board Viking Group. Since joining Viking as President and CEO in 2017, James has been a cornerstone of Viking's growth and innovation. With James' leadership, supported by the exceptional employees of the Viking Group, the company has expanded product offerings, increased footprint, and reinforced commitment to safety and customer-focused solutions. As Chairman, James will continue to serve the Viking Group through direct engagement with customers, industry Associations, and laboratories while also leading our intellectual property development and defense. James will also help shape Viking's product roadmap, which is something he's uniquely positioned to do given his background in fire protection, including dozens of patents and involvement in NFPA *Standards* development.

"Under James' leadership, Viking has thrived, improving its position as an unquestioned leader in fire protection," said Klaus Hofmann, Chairman of Minimax Viking Group, owner of Viking Group, Inc. "James is not only well-respected internationally as a leader in the field, his dedication to both our mission and our people is truly unmatched."

For more information visit: www.vikinggroupinc.com.

*Have two goals:
wisdom – that is,
knowing and doing
what is right – and
common sense.
— Proverbs 3:21*



Jeremy Morton has been promoted to Chief Executive Officer with Viking Group, Inc. Since joining Viking in 2019, he has played a pivotal role in driving the company's growth, efficiency, and strategic direction, most recently in his position as Chief Operating Officer, which he has held since 2020. Before joining Viking, he was President of STANLEY Access Technologies, a division of Stanley Black & Decker, and held key leadership positions at Ingersoll Rand and Schneider Electric. A graduate of Purdue University with both a bachelor's and master's degree, Jeremy is dedicated to operational excellence, strategic expansion, and fostering innovation within the fire protection industry.



Jamie Halfmann will assume the role of Viking's Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer. With nearly 20 years in leadership at Viking, Jamie brings a deep knowledge of the organization to his new position. Having served as Chief Financial Officer since 2020, he has been instrumental in strengthening Viking's financial strategy, optimizing operations, and supporting the company's long-term growth. His expertise in financial planning, operational efficiency, and cross-functional leadership has helped Viking expand its market presence.

For more information visit: www.vikinggroupinc.com.

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Association News

Florida

The Florida Fire Sprinkler Association, a Chapter of NFSA, alongside AFSA FL, are hosting Legislative Day 2025 on August 22, and we want YOU to be a part of it.

This year has brought both challenges and victories for the fire sprinkler industry in the legislative arena. Legislative Day is a crucial planning session for 2026, and the more voices we have, the stronger our impact will be.

We've invited key partners to join us at the table, including the Integration Association of Florida, Automatic Fire Alarm Association, Fire Equipment Dealers, Florida Fire Marshals Association, and Florida Fire Chiefs Association. Together, with their lobbyists and several legislators, we'll be navigating the legislative landscape to ensure our industry's voice is heard.

Your involvement can make all the difference. Please mark your calendars and



to RSVP go to www.nfsa.org, choose events-calendar-Florida-August, click, and sign up. We're meeting at Margari-taville in Kissimmee, Florida, on August 22, 2025 – and we NEED YOU there!

For more information contact: Lor-rell Bush, Executive Director, Florida Fire Sprinkler Association, a Chapter of NFSA, (954) 275-8487, bush@nfsa.org.

Georgia

The Georgia Fire Sprinkler Association held their General Meeting & Net-working event on May 13, 2025, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the SPP Pumps facility in Norcross, Georgia.

Lunch was provided after the General Meeting for paid members.

The presentation was an overview of the Cobb County Fire Marshal's Office implementation of the Accela software platform for *Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance (ITM)* report submittals. Attendees learned: how to efficiently upload ITM reports through the system; how the software will utilize the e-mail interface for seamless communication between submitting contract company and property site contact; and how to properly submit *Records of Repairs*.

Additionally, the session covered step-by-step guidance on submitting requests

for limited work and sprinkler work permits to resolve any deficiencies that would require a permit. This presentation was designed to help attendees streamline the reporting process and learn how to navigate Accela with some tips to ensure ease of use.

On **June 9, 2025**, as part of ACE Training & Testing, they will hold *NFPA-25 2023 Updates-Proper Application and Use*.

On **September 9, 2025**, the General Membership Meeting & Cornhole Tournament will begin at 3:30 p.m. at StillFire Brewing, 343 US-23, Suwanee, Georgia.

On **October 24, 2025**, they hold the Annual Bob McCullough Golf Tournament!

And the Christmas Gathering at Punchbowl Social will be on **December 9, 2025**.

For more information contact: Georgia Fire Sprinkler Association, 1525 Broad-moor Blvd., Buford, GA 30518; www.georgiafiresprinkler.org.

Texas

The Fire Sprinkler Contractors Association of Texas (FSCATX) is a non-profit trade association, originally formed in 1981 as TXFSCA and re-formed in 2012



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as FSCATX, whose purpose is to educate and advance fire sprinkler contractors in the great state of Texas as well as promote and preserve ethical standards in the fire sprinkler industry.

FSCATX has joined 17 other trade associations to form the Texas Construction Association (TCA). Through our TCA affiliation, our members are provided the information they need to monitor legislative activity that directly affects our industry.

Upcoming events include Skins & Fins 2025, on June 5-8, 2025, and 3rd Qtr Chapter Luncheon/Roundtables on September 9, 2025, that are held near Dallas and other major Texas cities.

The 2025 Scottish Rite Charity Golf Classic will be held October 13, 2025, at the Trophy Club Country Club, 500 Trophy Club Drive, Trophy Club, Texas.

For more information contact: FSCATX, PO Box 14, Walburg, TX 78673; (512) 844-6632, <https://fscatx.org>.

Virginia

The AFSA Virginia Chapter will meet Tuesday June 3, 2025, at the Dominion Raceway, 6501 Dominion Raceway Ave, Thornburg, Virginia.

The AFSA Directors Board meeting

will meet at 10:00 a.m. with lunch served at 12:00 Noon.

The AFSA Members meeting will be held from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

The program will feature Jason Gill with Crews and Gregory. He will provide an abbreviated version of his popular discussion from last year's AFSA Conference, *Getting Your Hands Dirty-Big Profits from Small Business*.

The Vendor Presentation will feature Taylor Pace with Standpipe Testing. He will provide information of what his companies provides and how they can help yours.

Steve McGee, Executive Director AFSA VA Chapter, is putting out the word: For all those who believe they have the fastest car now is the time to show it off. For \$35 you can run your vehicle on the road course with speeds exceeding 100 mph. The catch is we need to have a minimum of five drivers to be able to participate. Last year was a blast, watching Cadillacs, Mustangs, Mercedes, Challengers, and others maneuver the road course. If you want your friends to experience the ride they can ride along at no additional cost.

The AFSA/BSF Golf Tournament on September 24, 2025, Williamsburg

National has sold out. They are taking names or teams to be put on the wait list. As it has happened every year, someone or some team has, for whatever reason, had to cancel so don't give up, sign up. Also, see how you can support the Association and the charities it benefits.

Annual Seminar: Steve McGee, Executive Director AFSA VA Chapter reports that Tom Klecka has put together another outstanding seminar at the Chesterfield Fire Training Center with three highly discussed topics to interest many within your departments. [See Seminar on page 36.]

For more information contact: Steve McGee, exedirafsava@gmail.com, www.virginiaafsa.org. □

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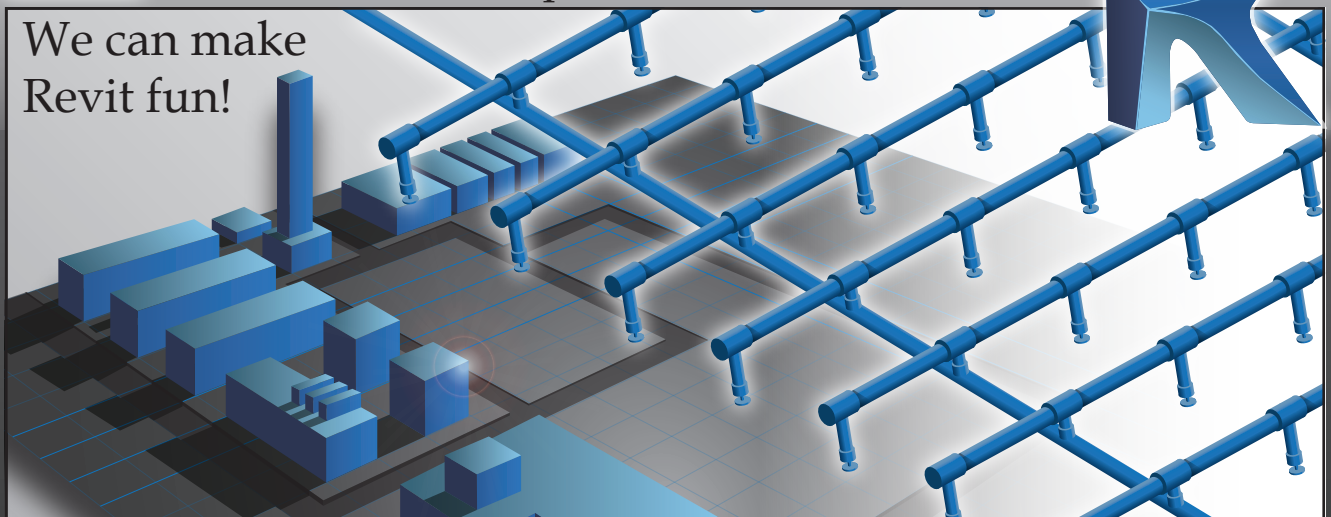
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AGF's PURGENVENT™ Model 7940BLE

AGF Manufacturing proudly announces the release of the PURGENVENT™ Model 7940BLE, a Build America, Buy America Act (BABAA)-compliant automatic air venting valve assembly designed to increase the longevity and reliability of wet pipe fire sprinkler systems. With integrated features for streamlined installation, system protection, and NFPA 13 compliance, the 7940BLE sets a new standard for air management in fire protection.

"The 7940BLE is a comprehensive solution to help contractors meet NFPA 13 Code requirements while simplifying installation and improving long-term system performance," said Jim McHugh, President of AGF Manufacturing. "It's everything you need for compliant venting in one factory-assembled, American-made package."

NFPA 13 now mandates air venting on all wet pipe fire sprinkler systems using metallic pipe. The 7940BLE is engineered to meet this requirement with a UL Listed and FM Approved 7900V automatic air vent that efficiently expels trapped air during normal operation, helping reduce internal corrosion and the risk of system damage.

The 7940BLE features the FM Approved and UL Listed 7900V automatic air vent, which utilizes a conical, recessed design and a single-float mechanism for precise, protected venting. An integrated isolation valve and strainer allow for safe maintenance while preventing debris from entering the system. The assembly also includes a purge valve with union and hose connection that speeds up air removal during system filling, simplifies strainer cleaning, and acts as a vacuum breaker to assist with complete system drainage. To support federally funded projects, the 7940BLE is constructed with BABAA-compliant materials, including domestic pipe, cou-

plings, and end caps. Its durable branch line extension (BLE) is fabricated from Schedule 10 or 40 domestic pipe, finished with a tough red powder coating, and clearly marked with "AIR VENT" signage for easy identification during inspections and servicing.

AGF recommends installing the 7940BLE near the high end of system branch lines – where air naturally accumulates – for optimal performance. The unit's high-visibility signage and built-in service features ensure quick location and easier maintenance access, especially in overhead or hard-to-reach locations.

For more information about the 7940BLE or to find a distributor in your area visit: www.agfmfg.com, (610) 240-4900.

General Air Products' Digital Maintenance Timer

General Air Products announced a new addition to its product offerings: The Digital Maintenance Timer (DMT-1). This device acts as a notification system for required annual maintenance on select fire protection air supply equipment, including General Air Products' line of air compressors, nitrogen generators, and the Vapor Pipe Shield.

The Digital Maintenance Timer is set at installation and will alert the user that the attached unit is in need of maintenance after 11 months of use. The alert, a red LED and buzzer, can also be connected via an alarm contact terminal. Since the DMT-1 is battery operated, users don't need to worry about an external power source.

General Air Products prides itself on quality products and customer service and the Digital Maintenance Timer provides a convenient and reliable way to achieve both, assisting customers in staying up-to-date with maintenance needs in order to keep their equipment running at its best for as long as possible.

For more information contact: General Air Products, 855-769-5652, www.generalairproducts.com.



Literature



Brass Knuckle® BK-Anti-FOG and BK-Anti-FOG New Brochure

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Why do the lenses of safety glasses fog? Science! What our eyes see as fog is actually thousands of tiny water bubbles that form when moisture in the air condenses on the lenses. You've got to fight science with science, so Brass Knuckle® invented two anti-fog lens coatings that prevent these bubbles from forming. Now specifiers, safety managers, supervisors, and forepersons can learn more about both BK-Anti-FOG applications in a new brochure. Find out how Brass Knuckle sets the world standard for anti-fog protection with products that last either 15 times longer or 45 times longer than the most stringent *Standard* in the world, EN 168.

Both BK-Anti-FOG and BK-Anti-FOG+ are bonded directly onto the lens surface, not sprayed on like some cheaper alternatives, so lenses retain their fog-fighting properties wear after wear. Because it is bonded directly to the lens, you can't wipe it off, either. There's no reapplying and no maintenance needed.

Anti-fog coatings are all about time. They are designed to keep the lens clear from the moment fog would normally form to the moment the lens adjusts to the temperature change. Depending on the temperature differential, it can require seconds or even minutes for this period of adjustment to occur. This is key to understanding why not all anti-fog coatings are created equal.

BK-Anti-FOG lasts for two full minutes, for a fog-free view under even the most demanding hot and humid conditions. BK-Anti-FOG+ protection lasts more than six minutes. In the world of eye protection, it's as good as anti-fog protection gets. By comparison, the aforementioned EN 168 *Standard* requires only eight seconds.

Brass Knuckle offers loads of extra time for lenses to come into balance with temperature fluctuations, dramatically reducing fog duration or eliminating it entirely. That means greater vision, improved safety, and increased compliance – because a goggle removed to wipe off fog is a goggle that isn't protecting the eyes. Whereas glasses that don't fog stay right where they belong.

For more information contact: Brass Knuckle® Safety Products, 1335 Ridgeland Parkway, Suite 120, Alpharetta, GA 30004; (770) 674-8930, www.brassknuckleprotection.com.

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dition to the PSI platform.”

“We are very pleased to bring FirePro into the PSI family,” said PSI CEO Jodi Kohler. “We are excited about the new opportunities this partnership will bring, and we look forward to continuing the strong reputation FirePro has worked hard to build.”

PSI is committed to delivering high-quality customer service through its ‘single-point-of-management’ compliance services for all fire and life safety inspection, repair and installations in the Pacific Northwest, Mountain West, the California Bay Area and Hawaii. PSI also provides cylinder requalification, cylinder maintenance, fire equipment parts distribution and dedicated marine suppression services. With decades of experience in the fire and life safety industry, PSI’s mission is to help save lives by providing meaningful fire and life safety protection and training.

“FirePro will further establish PSI’s presence in the Pacific Northwest and bolster growth in the region,” said Riv-

erside Partner John McKernan. “This investment further exemplifies PSI’s goal of partnering with companies that excel in quality service and reliability.”

Working with Schlachet and McKernan on the deal for Riverside were Assistant Vice President Aakeem Andrada, Analyst Nikolai Kassogue, Analyst Kyle Davis, Operating Partner Shaun Kelly, and Finance Director Chrissie Yim. Origination Partner Cheryl Strom helped source the deal for Riverside.

About The Riverside Company: The Riverside Company is a global investment firm focused on being one of the leading private equity and flexible capital options for business owners and portfolio company employees at the smaller end of the middle market by seeking to fuel transformative growth and create lasting value. Since its founding in 1988, Riverside has made more than 1,000 investments. The firm’s international private equity and flexible capital portfolios include more than 140 companies.

For more information visit: www.riversidecompany.com.

THE ASSOCIATED BUILDERS AND CONTRACTORS (ABC) is celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2025. ABC is a national construction industry trade Association established in 1950 with 67 chapters and more than 23,000 members. Founded on the merit shop philosophy, ABC helps members develop people, win work, and deliver that work safely, ethically, and profitably for the betterment of the communities in which ABC and its members work.

On their website you can find Contractors, a Chapter Locator, Craft Training & Apprenticeship, and learn about Upcoming Events.

You can also visit: www.abc.org/economics for the Construction Backlog Indicator and Construction Confidence Index, plus analysis of spending, employment, job openings, and the Producer Price Index.

For more information contact: The Associated Builders and Contractors, 440 First St., N.W., Suite 200, Washington, DC 20001; 800-621-2993, www.abc.org. □

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Calendar



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 Mistwood Golf Club, Romeoville, IL
www.ilburnpreventionassoc.com
 (224) 422-0646, IBPAGolf@gmail.com

June 3-5, 2025

FIRE PROTECTION & LOSS CONTROL
 Stillwater, OK, Okla. State U. (OSU)
 (405) 744-5715, ceatfire@okstate.edu
www.ceat.okstate.edu

June 4, 2025

NFPA 13D RESIDENTIAL FS SYSTEMS
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www.training.firesmarts.com

June 5-8, 2025

14TH ANNUAL TEXAS SKINS AND FINS
For Association Programs
 South Shore Harbour Resort
 League City, TX
 FSCATX, (512) 844-6632
info@fscatx.org, www.fscatx.org

June 9, 2025

GBA ANNUAL CHARITY GOLF
For Firefighters Burn Institute
 The Club at Ruby Hill
 Pleasanton, CA
 AFSA Greater Bay Area Chapter
GreaterBayAreaChapter@gmail.com
 AFSA-GBA.org

June 12, 2025

47TH NFSA NJ CHAPTER GOLF OUTING
For NJ FMBA, Heart Assoc., & More
(in Memory of Bill Phair)
 Heron Glen G.C., Ringoes Twp, NJ
 Dave Davis, 866-226-6006
davis@nfsa.org

June 16-18, 2025*

NFPA CONFERENCE & EXPO[®]
 Las Vegas, NV, www.nfpa.org

June 23-24, 2025

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www.ceat.okstate.edu

June 25, 2025

28TH DEAN CORNWELL GOLF CLASSIC
For Association Programs
 Twelve Stones G.C., Goodlettsville, TN
 Tennessee Fire Spk. Contractors Assoc.
 Brian Biggs, (615) 642-9717
biggs@nfsa.org, www.tfscsca.com

June 25-27, 2025

FIRE PUMP ... INSPECTION & TESTING
 Oklahoma State University (OSU)
 (405) 744-5715, ceatfire@okstate.edu
www.ceat.okstate.edu

July 10, 2025

18TH BURN AID GOLF CLASSIC
For Tangier Shriners Transp. Fund
 Indian Creek Golf Club, Elkhorn, NE
 Fire Spk. Contr. Assoc. of NE (FSCAN)
 Kevin Mendick, kevin@mfp-inc.com
www.fscan.org

July 22-25, 2025*

SOUTHERN FIRE SPRINKLER SUMMIT
Theme = Caddyshack
 Hilton Pensacola Beach, Pensacola, FL
 Ellen Ballard, (318) 841-1494
www.southernfiresprinklersummit.org

July 25, 2025

CFPA ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT
For Children's Hosp. & Burn Camps
 Arrowhead Golf Club, Littleton, CO
 Bryan Echelberger, (720) 935-5846
bryan@veritasfire.com
www.cofireprotection.org

August 13, 2025

NFSA MICHIGAN GOLF OUTING
 Shepherd's Hollow Golf Club
 Clarkston, MI, www.nfsa.org
 Ron Ritchey, NFSA
 (765) 412-6707, ritchey@nfsa.org
www.birdease.com/nfsamichigangolf

August 19, 2025

37TH BURN CENTER INVITATIONAL
For St. Mary's Burn Center & More
 Grand Geneva Resort, Lake Geneva, WI
 Jim Gawloski, gawloksij@gmail.com
www.giveawf.org/bcgi

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August 21, 2025

NFSA INDIANA CHAP. GOLF OUTING
For Hoosier Burn Camp
Country Club of Indianapolis
Ron Ritchey, (765) 412-6707
ritchey@nfsa.org
www.birdease.com/22940

September 8, 2025

29TH NFSA MN BURNAID CLASSIC
For Burn Aid Foundation & More
Dellwood C.C., Dellwood, MN
Matt Gallagher, (651) 755-3906
info@burnaidfoundation.org

September 11, 2025

ANNUAL GOLF OUTING
AFSA Chesapeake Chapter
The Links at Challedon, Mt. Airy, MD
Danielle Fowler, (410) 972-1122
daniellef@pottersignal.com
www.afsachesapeakechapter.org

September 22, 2025

36TH ANNUAL BURN OUTING
For State Burn Center & More
The Medallion Club, Westerville, OH
Bob Dawson, bdd4@yahoo.com
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September 24, 2025

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September 24, 2025

32ND AFSA-VA BURN SURV. GOLF
For Burn Survivors Foundation
Williamsburg N.G.C., VA
Bob Beckwith, bbeckwith@cavalier-
fire.com, Hooper Loscomb, timothy.
loscomb@eaglefire.com

September 24-25, 2025

24TH INT'L WATER MIST CONFERENCE
Hyatt Regency Hotel, Manchester, UK
www.iwma.net

October 5-11, 2025

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

October 6, 2025

KFSCAF ANNUAL GOLF OUTING
Frankfort Country Club, Frankfort, KY
Michelle Jacobi, KY Fire Spk. Contr.
Assoc. Foundation, michelle@ksae.
com, (502) 223-5322, www.kfsca.org

October 9, 2025

FIRE SPRINKLER CONTRACTORS
ASSOCIATION CHARITY GOLF
For Burn Centers
Strawberry Farms G.C., Irvine, CA
Larry Seligman, (626) 673-5345
larry@apfs.com

October 10, 2025

GBA BOWLING TOURNAMENT
For Association Programs
Dublin, CA, AFSA - Greater Bay Area
Chapter, www.afsa-gba.org

October 13, 2025

35TH SCOTTISH RITE CHARITY CLASSIC
For Scottish Rite Hosp. for Children
Trophy Club Country Club
Trophy Club, TX
Sarah Kiefer, (512) 844-6632
sarah@fscatx.org, www.fscatx.org

October 14-19, 2025*

AFSA44 CONVENTION, EXHIBITION,
& APPRENTICE COMPETITION
Washington, D.C.
www.firesprinkler.org

October 20-24, 2025

CASA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Vancouver, BC
www.casa-firesprinkler.org

October 21-23, 2025

SFPE ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXPO
Vancouver, BC
SFPE, www.sfpe.org

October 24, 2025

25TH BOB McCULLOUGH MEMORIAL
For Fire Safety Educational Projects
Chateau Elan, Braselton, GA
Mindy McCullough Buckley
mindy@allsouthsprinkler.com
www.georgiafiresprinkler.org

October 27, 2025

17TH LFSA GOLF TOURNAMENT
Beneficiary To Be Determined
Santa Maria G.C., Baton Rouge, LA
Ellen Ballard, (318) 841-1494
Louisiana Fire Sprinkler Association
eballard@firetechsystems.com
www.lafiresprinkler.org

NOVEMBER 14, 2025


NORCAL-NV SFPE GOLF EVENT
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Tilden Park G.C., Berkeley, CA
Patrick Kogoma, (925) 997-3247
patrick.kogoma@ffic.com
www.ncnsfpe.org

November 21, 2025

GARY WENNES MEMORIAL GOLF
For Arizona Burn Foundation
Biltmore Golf Club, Phoenix, AZ
Matthew Virtue, Cell (602) 376-4818
matthew.virtue@VICTAULIC.COM
Danny Garcia, dgarcia1@winsupply.com
www.AZfiresprinkler.org

December 9, 2025

GFSA CHRISTMAS GATHERING
For Toys for Tots
Punchbowl Social, Atlanta, GA
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Seminars & Events

Virginia AFSA 2025 Annual Seminar

September 18, 2025 – Chesterfield, VA

The Virginia Chapter of the American Fire Sprinkler Association (AFSA) is presenting several seminars on September 18, 2025, in Chesterfield, Virginia, including *Freeze Protection for Water-Based Fire Protection Systems NFPA 13 – 2022 Edition*; *Sprinklers in Combustible Concealed Spaces NFPA 13 - 2022 Edition*; and *Roles and Responsibilities NFPA 25 – 2023 Edition*.

The location is the Chesterfield Fire Training Center, 6610 Public Safety Road, Chesterfield, Virginia.

Registration: Rates are per person. Please check your category on line. You are encouraged to bring your own books to class. This seminar is expected to sell out and space is limited. *Please, submit registration form no later than September 1 to ensure placement.*

Freeze Protection for Water-Based Fire Protection Systems NFPA 13 – 4 hours: This presentation provides a comprehensive review of the requirements for protection against freezing for sprinkler systems, standpipe and hose systems,

fire pumps, and water-storage tanks. Attendees will examine the requirements for when protection against freezing must be provided and the permissible means of addressing the issue including dry and preaction systems, antifreeze, heat tape, heaters, and insulation. Finally, attendees will review the requirements from NFPA 25 regarding the ongoing requirements for freeze protection.

Upon completion of this presentation, attendees should be able to locate and explain the requirements for when fire protection systems must be protected from freezing; identify the permissible options for freeze protection; explain the current requirements for using antifreeze for freeze protection; explain the owner's responsibilities for existing systems from freezing. If you are a contractor, inspector, building owner or manager, AHJ, or engineer, this presentation is for you.

Sprinkler in Combustible Concealed Spaces NFPA 13 – 2 hours: This presentation will review the installation and discharge requirements for sprinklers located in (or omitted from) combustible concealed spaces. In addition to a basic overview of types of construction and

combustibility, this presentation will focus on the installation requirements for concealed spaces not requiring sprinkler protection including the 16 construction arrangements that permit sprinkler omission. This presentation includes a discussion on the application of standard spray and special sprinklers installed within combustible concealed spaces and a review of the discharge requirements where the participant will learn how to properly apply the 3,000 sq. ft. rule.

Understanding Roles and Responsibilities NFPA 25 – 2 hours: This presentation reviews the roles and responsibilities of the property owner, AHJ, and service provider as spelled out in NFPA 25. A detailed review of the property owner's responsibilities as outlined in Chapter 4 is provided along with the required interaction of the AHJ and service provider. The presentation concludes by examining the needed characteristics of today's inspector along with their duties. This presentation benefits property owners, AHJs, contractors, and individual inspectors.

The instructor is Bob Caputo, CFPS, President of the AFSA, and current Chair of the NFPA 24 and NFPA 291 technical committees. He is also a member of multiple NFPA technical committees, including NFPA 13 and NFPA 25. Caputo is a contributor of the NFPA 13 and NFPA 25 *Handbooks*, the NFPA *Inspection Manual*, and the 21st Edition of the *Fire Protection Handbook*. Caputo has written and presented seminars worldwide.

He was "Fire Prevention Officer of the Year" in San Diego County in 1994, "Person of the Year" from *Fire Protection Contractor Magazine* in 1997, and the Henry S. Parmelee award winner from AFSA in 2017.

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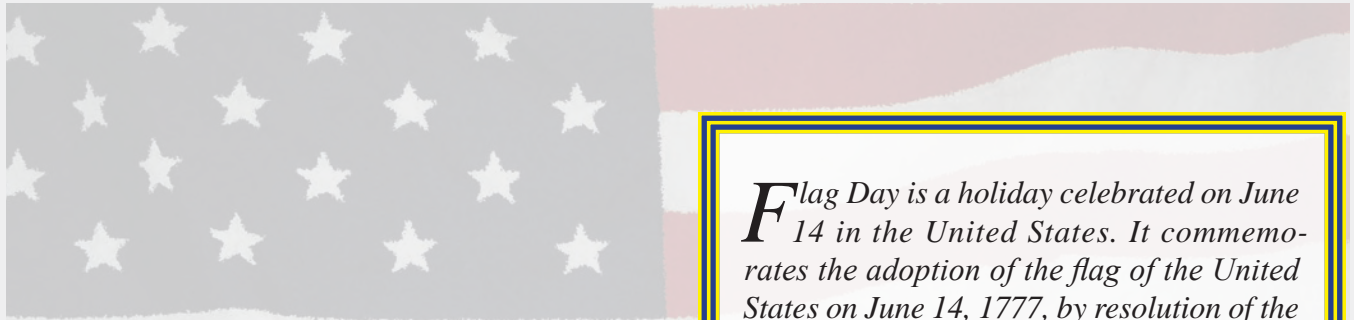
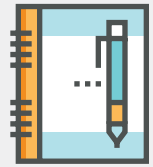
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D-Day Prayer: *Let us ever be grateful for what was done for us all on June 6, 1944.*

Troops from the U.S.A. and our Allies crossed the English Channel in a great operation to depose a tyrant and end a war.

We thank the Lord our God for this triumph and pray that we always remember this great sacrifice and effort. May we live with grateful hearts and seek God's will in all we do.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Flag Day is a holiday celebrated on June 14 in the United States. It commemorates the adoption of the flag of the United States on June 14, 1777, by resolution of the Second Continental Congress.

Fly your Flag.

Ilove a Parade. The 250th anniversary celebration of the United States Army will include a parade on June 14th in Washington D.C.

We pray that this will be a blessing for America and serve to rebuild our military, improve moral, encourage recruitment, and deter evil-doers.

Fire Sprinklers Save Lives! A fire broke out on the 14th floor of a high rise in Hollywood, California. This according to an item by Chris Lindahl on www.patch.com, May 5, 2025. Firefighters responded to 1522 N. Gordon St., north of Sunset Boulevard, just before 11:00 a.m. Sunday, according to the LAFD. A sprinkler system put out the fire.

A fire that started Sunday morning on the ninth floor of an 11-floor apartment building at Nowlin Hall has left nearly 150 residents, many of them seniors and people with disabilities, displaced after water from the sprinkler system caused widespread damage and knocked out power to the building.

This according to an article by Ryan Hennessy published May 4, 2025, on www.kctv5.com, Kansas City, Missouri. Multiple residents said the fire began in a woman's apartment while she was out.

The flames were quickly put out, but the building's sprinkler system triggered a cascade of water that poured down through nine floors of the high-rise.

The fire itself was contained, but the aftermath left the building unsafe to stay in due to electrical damage caused by the flooding. [A puddle of water or a pile of ashes?]



Proverbs 16:3

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Fort Pierce, FL.....\$2.8 Million
Orlando, FL\$11 Million

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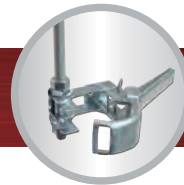
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