



February 2009



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Remember if you have code or technical questions, the Expert of the Day is there for NFSA members.

Email them at eod.nfsa.org

A CONVINCING LIGHTWEIGHT HOME CONSTRUCTION VIDEO

By: Don Pamplin, NFSA Pacific-Northwest Regional Manager

As we all know, the homebuilders and their respective state and national associations have been saying for years that **“new homes don’t burn”**. What outrageous propaganda ! There are other myths that the homebuilders have perpetuated as well and we could fill page after page of that deceptive documentation but this one is really bad because it creates an illusion that deceives the home owner. The North American Fire Service knows that this is a huge lie because they recognize two major concerns with residential fire:

1. Whether the home is old or new, the first stages of any residential fire involves room contents. This is the primary fuel load and with the current level of fabric exposure and composition (drapes, upholstery and carpeting), together with wood and plastic furniture, the ignition temperature of many of these products is well under 1000 degrees Fahrenheit which is the approximate temperature when some “flashovers” would start to occur. When flashover happens, the majority of combustible materials in the area of fire origin will start to rapidly burn and this fire phenomenon can occur as quickly as three minutes after primary ignition. This is long before the fire department arrives and it usually means that the occupant’s chance of survival and escape is not very good and may not exist at all.
2. If the home is new or if the home is older but has had some current major renovations, the use of engineered lightweight wood roof trusses and “I” flooring joists is now a major concern for firefighters who are entering the home to fight a fire that usually has reached flashover ignition. Wood trusses have been common components of residential and light commercial buildings since the 1970’s and the fire service has known about these hidden dangers for a long, long time dating back to a December 26, 1992 United States Fire Administration (USFA) report entitled “Wood Truss Roof Collapse Claims Two Firefighters”. In addition, the National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH) did a report in April, 2005 entitled “Preventing Injuries and Death to Firefighters Due to Truss System Failures” and the National Institute of Technology (NIST) did a report in January, 2007 entitled “A Study of Metal Truss Plate Connectors When Exposed To Fire”. All of this and a tragic series of firefighter deaths in these types of structures have brought the fire service to a justified “defensive-mode of operation position” that means

REGIONAL REPORT

Central Edition



firefighters may be held back from entering a burning structure if there is any indication that a collapse is possible. That makes sense, especially when the average “Total Intervention Time” (TIT) of fire departments across North America exceeds 10 minutes and the fire department is arriving on-scene after flashover and after the lightweight construction has been exposed to fire for that elapsed time.

Take some time to look at a news video that clearly shows how lightweight “I” joist flooring collapses when exposed to open flame, the same as what would be happening after flashover occurs in the home. Note the following:

- Just 20 seconds into the demonstration, charring on the manufactured “I” beam was much more noticeable than that of the solid wood board;
- Within five minutes a hole had burned through the center of the composite wood and glue “I” beam webbing;
- At 13 minutes into the blaze, the webbing area in the middle of the “I” beam had burned away leaving just the bottom piece of the beam to support the weight above;
- Within 15 minutes and 21 seconds, the floor collapsed because the composite “I” beam had totally failed while the solid wood joist was still strong enough to step on.

The video can be seen by connecting to <http://www.wisn.com/video/17971947/index.html> **An NFPA 13D residential sprinkler system, stops flashover, allows occupants to safely exit the home and prevents building collapses which saves firefighter lives and property damage. That’s a win-win-win that homeowners need to know about.**

Get Registered for NFSA Annual Seminar & Exhibition Today

While winter’s wrath has made it the customary cold and blustery in Northern climes, things are really heating up at NFSA. Plans for the upcoming Annual Seminar & Exhibition have been finalized and registration materials are now available. With programming focused on industry advancement and business survival strategies, fire sprinkler contractors will find immediate value. There are “early-bird” registration discounts, and even a special reduced registration fee for contractors’ management teams. Break the winter doldrums. Plan today to meet in Orlando in April with NFSA – the fire sprinkler industry experts.

[Download registration brochure here](#)

NFSA Area Director and SAM Council Election Results In

NFSA is pleased to announce that John Kauffman III of Kauffman Company has been elected by the members in the South Central region to serve on the Contractors Council and Board of Directors. The region is comprised of the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas. Mr. Kauffman will be seated at the February 2009 meetings of the Board and Councils. In the Great Lakes region, Rich Ackley of Dalmatian Fire ran unopposed for another term representing contractors in the states of Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, West Virginia and Kentucky. In the Pacific Northwest region, Jim Boulanger of Patriot Fire Protection was elected to represent contractors in the states of Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. He ran unopposed and succeeds Jeff Bennett of The McKinstry Company, who did not seek re-election. Each will serve 2-year terms. In the SAM Council election, the following individuals have been elected to 3-year terms; Gary Johnson – BlazeMaster/Lubrizol; Cary Nicol – Viking SupplyNet and Donald J. Smith – Chicago Backflow.

NFSA and Common Voices Participate in D.C. Press Conference with National Fire Service Leadership

The National Fire Sprinkler Association participated with National Fire Service Leadership at historic Station 3 in a national media advisory on Wednesday, January 7, 2009. NFSA's Associate Director of Public Fire Protection Vickie Pritchett, joined Philadelphia Fire Commissioner Lloyd Ayers, Baltimore Fire Chief James Clack and Washington, D.C. Fire Chief Dennis Rubin, United States Fire Administrator (USFA) Greg Cade, International Association of Fire Chiefs FLSS Representative Mike Love, and Dr. Burt Clark of the National Fire Academy to highlight recent tragic fires and offer solutions, which include having working smoke alarms, installing residential fire sprinkler systems, and having a fire escape plan.

[View the press release](#)

NFSA Partners with IAFC on Sprinkler Resources for Communities

NFSA is very pleased to announce that the Second Edition of the "Residential Fire Sprinklers ... Step by Step Approach for Communities" guide and updated companion *Look Up for Safety* CD/DVD set is now available. By partnering with the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the guide is being made available at no charge to fire service and community leaders. For details, contact NFSA's Resource Center at grepko@nfsa.org.

[View the full press release](#)

[Download Step-by-step guide here](#)

Sprinkler Saves....

There were no fire sprinkler saves reported last month.

NFSA Sets Technical Tuesdays Online Seminars Schedule

Classes Scheduled for 2009:

Two-Week Layout Technician Training

March 2 - March 13, 2009	Orlando, FL
March 23 - April 3, 2009	Cincinnati, OH
August 10 - August 21, 2009	Omaha, NE
September 14 - September 25, 2009	Baltimore, MD
October 10 - October 23, 2009	Phoenix, AZ

Inspection & Testing for the Sprinkler Industry

January 26 - 28	Marana AZ
April 7 - 9	Champaign, IL
April 21 - 23	Nashville, TN

REGIONAL REPORT

Central Edition



NFSA has announced new topics for the first half of 2009 for its acclaimed series of Technical Tuesdays online seminars:

- February 10 **Tanks for Fire Protection** *Kenneth E. Isman, P.E.*
- February 24 **Small Room Rule** *Cecil Bilbo, Jr., C.E.T.*
- March 10 **Applying the Seismic Load Tables** *Victoria B. Valentine, P.E.*
- March 24 **Copper Tube for Sprinkler Systems** *Michael Friedman, P.E.*
- April 7 **Older Systems and Components** *Russell P. Fleming, P.E.*
- April 21 **Questions on Single Family Sprinkler Installations** *Jeff Hugo, CBO*
- May 12 **Frequently Asked Questions – Part 4** *Kenneth E. Isman, P.E.*
- June 2 **Hydraulics for Non-Uniform Layouts** *Victoria B. Valentine, P.E.*
- June 16 **Sprinklers and the National Electrical Code** *Cecil Bilbo, Jr., C.E.T.*

Member volume discounts are available by contacting NFSA's Internet Services Assistant at Dawn@nfsa.org.

Upcoming Onsite Seminars.....

March 3rd, 4th, 5th, 2009 – St. Louis, MO Area, **Click [HERE](#) for the registration form**

- Classes:
- One Day Inspection Testing Maintenance
 - ½ Day Acceptance and Commissioning of Water Based Systems
 - ½ Day Underground Piping
 - ½ Day Basic Seismic
 - ½ Day Advanced Seismic

March 24th, 25th, 26th, 2009 – Davenport, IA Area, **Click [HERE](#) for the registration form**

- Classes:
- 2 Day NFPA 13 Overview and Introduction to Plan Review
 - 1 Day Plan Review Policies and Procedures

June 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 2009 – Branson, MO Area.

- Classes: TBA

Legislative Reports.....

Missouri: House Bill 2539. <http://www.house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills081/biltxt/intro/HB25391.htm>
<http://www.house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills081/bills/hb2539.htm>. This bill was not moved in the 2008 Legislator. We are waiting to see if it will be reintroduced for the 2009 session. There is another bill which was introduced in 2008 which would require any type of contractor to be licensed in the state of MO. The bill number is HB 2452 and can be viewed here

Sponsor: <http://www.house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills081/member/mem056.htm>

Bill Location on web:

<http://www.house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills081/bills/hb2452.htm> and
<http://www.house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills081/bilsum/intro/sHB2452I.htm>

Again we are waiting to see if this bill will be reintroduced in the 2009 session.

Kansas: Nothing to report at this time.

Iowa: Nothing to report at this time.

I am looking for known towns or cities which have any type of ordinance which requires fire sprinkler systems above the model code standards. I am specifically looking for any type ordinance and any square footage requirements that may be included. This information is needed to update our database. Please email me any information you may have on this. Thank you.