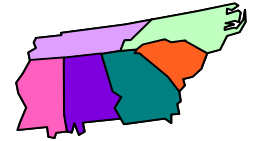




REGIONAL REPORT

Tennessee/South East Edition



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NFPA Calls for Draining of Dwelling Antifreeze Systems

The National Fire Protection Association has issued a safety alert on the subject of antifreeze in fire sprinkler systems protecting dwelling units, and is recommending that all such antifreeze solutions be drained and replaced with water until ongoing research can confirm safe antifreeze concentrations. The alert can be found through the following link:

<http://www.nfpa.org/antifreeze>

The NFPA alert is in reaction to a fire/explosion that took place in Truckee, California, last year. The NFPA technical committees that deal with automatic sprinkler systems, along with the NFPA's Fire Protection Research Foundation, have been working to determine the relevant factors that contributed to this loss, and are considering the issuance of Tentative Interim Amendments (TIAs) to the sprinkler standards affecting the use of antifreeze in systems protecting dwelling units. To this point in time, all indications suggest that the potential for a combustible sprinkler spray or explosion relate to the use of antifreeze concentrations in excess of 50 percent in combination with high system operating pressures. Various editions of the NFSA eTechAlert publication have addressed this issue as it developed.

TechNotes - Mail Delivery Survey Results

In the previous edition of NFSA's *Sprinkler TechNotes*, we asked for your opinion on whether or not you would prefer to continue to get copies of *TechNotes* by regular mail (hardcopy) or if you would rather receive *TechNotes* electronically by e-mail.

We received a total of 110 responses to the survey. Of the total, 81 people (74%) wanted to receive *TechNotes* via e-mail while 29 people (26%) wanted to receive *TechNotes* via regular mail. While this vote is hardly overwhelming, it is clear that a significant savings could be realized by the NFSA in distributing this newsletter by e-mail.

But we don't want to ignore the people that prefer to have the hardcopy mailed to them. So, here's what we're going to try for a while. We'll distribute *TechNotes* via e-mail. For the 29 people that prefer the hardcopy, we are going to continue to print out and mail you copies of the newsletter. This means you will probably get *TechNotes* in the regular mail a few days after it is sent via e-mail. Hopefully this will not be a problem.

If you would like to continue receiving *TechNotes* by regular mail, and you did not respond to the survey, please let us know and we will add you to the regular mail distribution list.

Thank you for your valuable feedback!

On a separate note, many of the people that responded to the survey said that they wanted to get *TechNotes* in an electronic form so that they could share it with other people. While the NFSA certainly sees the value in open communication, we want to remind everyone that *TechNotes* is a copyrighted publication and even in its electronic format, it

is a violation of that copyright to send the information on to other people without the express written permission of the NFSA. If there are people who legitimately work for companies that are members of the NFSA, they can receive their own copies of *TechNotes* (and our other publications like *GrassRoots* and *SQ Magazine*) for free by just sending us their e-mail address or mailing address on the letterhead of the company, asking to be added to the mailing list.

TechNotes is a specific benefit for the people that are members to the National Fire Sprinkler Association, helping them do better in their business and giving them an advantage over their non-member competition. To share this benefit with non-members would be forfeiting your advantage and diminishing the value of your own membership dues.

NICET Update

There are many changes occurring in NICET in all of the Fire Protection subfields of certification. In addition to moving away from the Work Element concept, NICET is also moving to Computer Based Testing (CBT). The CBT format holds tremendous advantages for people seeking certification. With the CBT format, a person can sit for an exam on any business day in one of hundreds of testing locations around the country. There would no longer be specific days where testing would be conducted and NICET will not have to pay proctors to sit and watch people take the exam.

Another benefit to the CBT format will be very quick return of grades to a person taking the exam. Right after finishing the exam, the person can get a printout of their score. Another potential feature of the CBT format will be that a person can get feedback on which subjects on they did not do well if they need to take the exam again.

Layout Certification Program

The Automatic Sprinkler Systems Layout certification is in the process of being renamed the Water-Based Fire Protection Systems Layout certification. The new name reflects the fact that people in the fire sprinkler business actually deal with all sorts of water-based fire protection systems, including water spray systems, standpipe systems, pumps and tanks.

For the new Water-Based Fire Protection Systems Layout certification program, the Level I and Level II tests have been written. NICET is currently in the process of beta testing the new exam to make sure that it works. Once the beta testing is done NICET will start making this new test available to everyone for Level I and Level II.

The new Level I and Level II test for the layout program will not have Work Elements like the old NICET exams. Instead, there will be a single test with many questions (the exact number is still being discussed). If you pass the exam, you will be certified at that Level. If you do not pass the test, you will have to take the whole exam again.

If you have already started down the path of getting NICET certification using the old Work Element program, NICET will continue to offer those tests and allow you to continue working towards certification for a period of time. The exact date has not been set for when the Work Element program will be phased out, but it should be operational until at least the summer of 2011. So, if you have started working toward NICET certification, and you prefer the Work Element format, make sure that you keep working towards certification and finish as soon as you can.

The Level III and Level IV tests for the layout program are still being developed. NICET is looking for Subject Matter Experts (SME) to continue writing questions for the material that they have identified to be on those exams. In order to be considered an SME, a person needs to have the following characteristics:

- At least 5 years of experience in sprinkler layout and detailing
- Support from an employer so that you can attend workshops at least two-days long
- Extensive and current knowledge of fire sprinkler systems and an awareness of the important tasks involved in laying out sprinkler systems
- You must not be a direct provider of education to people on layout of sprinkler systems

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If you are interested in becoming an SME to help NICET write questions, please go to the following web page: http://www.nicet.org/write_form.cfm and let NICET know of your interest.

Inspection and Testing Certification Program

NICET is also in the process of revising their Inspection and Testing (of water-based fire protection systems) certification program. This program was started in the 1990's, just after NFPA 25 was introduced and has not been significantly updated since.

NICET has several goals in mind for updating this program. First, NICET wants to move this program over the CBT format discussed earlier. In addition, NICET wants to eliminate the Work Element format and move the testing towards a larger exam.

However, NICET may not end up with a single exam for each certification Level like they have with the layout program. The plans are still being developed and discussed, so it is more difficult to say exactly what these tests are going to look like at this time. It is quite possible that there will be multiple tests (maybe three or four) to get to each Level of certification and once you pass one of the tests, you will not have to take it over.

NICET is moving quickly to revise this program, so more information will be available in the near future. Continue to watch NFSA publications for more information on what is going on with the certification programs.

On July 21-23, 2010, a committee of industry experts will be meeting to continue development of the Practice Analysis upon which the exam will be based. This process will take a few months. Once the Practice Analysis is complete, the SME's that need to write the exam questions can get to work writing questions that match the subjects identified in the Practice Analysis.

For now, the Practice Analysis is being based on the assumption that there will only be three Levels of certification in this program, like there has been in the past. The committee writing the Practice Analysis has not seen the need for a fourth Level of certification at this time, but it is possible that a fourth level could be developed in the future.

The plan is to have this revised certification program for Level I and Level II ready for the public before the end of 2010 and to have Level III ready by sometime in the spring of 2011. This is an ambitious plan, but NICET is committing the resources to get it done. Just like the layout program, NICET will allow people that have started to get certification under the Work Element format to continue working towards certification using that format for about a year after they unveil the new program. So, for those people planning on getting NICET certification in Inspection and Testing (of water-based fire protection systems) that prefer the Work Element format, our advice is to continue working towards certification at the Level you desire without delay.

Michael Minger Foundation:

The Michael H. Minger Foundation was awarded a \$175,965.00 Fire Prevention and Safety Grant through the Department of Homeland Security for two projects relating to campus fire safety. The first is to coordinate a national program during September that will encourage students to do community fire safety projects in partnership with their local fire departments such as smoke alarm installations in high-risk occupancies, fire safety education programs or installing fire sprinkler systems in Habitat for Humanity Homes. The second project is to develop campus safety information, with a focus on fire safety, specifically for students with disabilities. Under a previous grant, the Minger Foundation identified a serious gap in fire safety and safety protocols in general for students with any type of disability and this grant project will focus on closing that gap.

NFSA 105th Seminar & Biennial Exhibition Booth Space Selling Fast!

Booth space for the NFSA Seminar & Biennial Exhibition at the Baltimore Hilton is now on sale. The Seminar & Exhibition runs from April 7 – 9, 2011 in beautiful and family-friendly Baltimore, Maryland. The revitalization of Baltimore's Inner Harbor makes it the perfect destination for a great family mini-vacation! Join us at the 105th Seminar & Biennial Exhibition as the Industry's best vie for the title of Top-Tech. The Top Tech Competition takes place right in the exhibition hall, drawing excited crowds to watch the event AND visit your booth. Don't wait!

NFSA Offers Online Support

Efforts to block the adoption of residential fire-sprinkler regulations prompted the National Fire Sprinkler Association to an [online resource toolbox](#), which will provide community leaders with the information necessary to make the case for fire-sprinkler code adoption.

"The NFSA has experienced an upswing in requests for information regarding local code adoption and/or standalone fire sprinkler legislation," President John Viniello said.

The NFSA's free resource toolbox offers reports, articles, documents and brochures related to residential fire sprinklers and fire safety that provide guidance for making the case for fire-sprinkler code adoption. The goal of the toolbox is to highlight resources that have proved beneficial at the local level. Reports include the *Home Fire Sprinkler Cost Assessment* and the *Residential Fire Sprinklers and Housing Economics /A Legislator's Guide to Life Safety*.

"Local community leaders need all of the latest information in one place, where it is easy to access and use for their specific needs," said Shane Ray, the organization's director of public fire protection. "It can be overwhelming when you realize how many resources are available."

Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act of 2009

We need your help in getting our Senators to sign up as a co-sponsors, please use the Cap Wiz program on the NFSA Web Site.

To view the up to date information on the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act please go to www.nfsa.org or click on the

NFSA Annual Seminar & Exhibition Baltimore Hilton April 7 – 9, 2011



[Exhibition Information](#)