

Changes We Can Live With

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With many of the NFPA standards, codes, and the International Code Council in various stages of concluding their revision cycles, it is the perfect time to review some of the code changes on the horizon.

Please take note that many of these changes will not be published until late 2005 or early 2006 and must be adopted by your state before they become enforceable. However, since many state codes automatically adopt the latest version of the NFPA standards, these changes will most likely become effective immediately upon the standards' publication.

In the upcoming months, there are several publications that will be revised and reprinted, including NFPA 1, *The Fire Code*, NFPA 101, *The Life Safety Code*, NFPA 10, *Standard for Portable Extinguishers*, NFPA 96, *Standard for Ventilation Control and Fire Protection of Commercial Cooking Operations*, *The International Fire Code*, and *The International Building Code*. In addition, UL and ULC have just announced that they have harmonized the testing standards for portable extinguisher testing, which makes it possible to test to a single standard and receive a Canadian and U.S. listing mark. Revisions to these documents affect our businesses and the way in which you need to service your customers. Let's take a look at a few of the changes.

NFPA 10, *The Standard for Portable Extinguishers* received approximately 150 proposals during its ROP cycle. Many of the proposals were accepted, and as a result, the document will be changed significantly. In addition, the document will be reformatted in an effort to make it more user-friendly. Since it is impossible to discuss every change in this article, I will only review

some of the more significant changes heading your way:

- ◆ Fire extinguishers shall be provided for the protection of both the building structure and the occupancy hazards contained therein regardless of the presence of any fixed fire suppression systems.
- ◆ Stored pressure extinguishers manufactured prior to October 1984 shall be removed from service at the next six-year maintenance interval, the next hydrotest interval, or both.
- ◆ Extinguishers for pressurized flammable liquids and pressurized gas fires require large capacity extinguishers of 10 lb. or greater that have a discharge rate of 1 lb. per second or more.

Positive code requirements within these core codes and standards have given new life to the fire equipment marketplace and will significantly change the landscape in the years to come.

NFPA 96, *Standard for Ventilation Control and Fire Protection of Commercial Cooking Operations* has just published its revised edition. Copies are available for purchase, and it is a useful document to have in your company library for reference. Some of the significant changes to this document include:

- ◆ A placard identifying the use of the extinguisher as a secondary backup means to the automatic fire extinguishing system shall be conspicuously placed near each portable fire extinguisher intended to be used for protection in the cooking area.

- ◆ In existing systems, when changes in the cooking media, positioning, or replacement of cooking equipment occur, the fire extinguishing system shall be made to comply with UL 300.

- ◆ Any abandoned pipe or conduit from a previous installation shall be removed from within the hood, plenum, and exhaust duct.

- ◆ Obstructions to spray patterns from the cooking appliance nozzle(s) such as baffle plates, shelves, or any modification, shall not be permitted.

- ◆ Fusible links shall be replaced at least semi-annually or more frequent if necessary where required by the manufacturer.

- ◆ Solid fuel appliances can be protected using a 6 L wet chemical, Class K extinguisher.

NFPA 1, *Uniform Fire Code* received some 176 proposals during its ROP cycle. Many of the proposals did not affect portables, systems, or occupant hose. However, there is important information contained in the following sections:

- ◆ Table 13.6.1.2 shows where and when portable fire extinguishers are required. This can be extremely helpful when installation of extinguishers is being questioned.

- ◆ 50.4.4.6: In existing systems, when changes in the cooking median, positioning, or replacement of cooking equipment occur, the fire extinguishing system shall be made to comply with UL 300.

- ◆ 13.6.6.7.1: Class K fire extinguishers shall be provided for hazards where there is a potential for fires involving combustible cooking media (vegetable or animal oils and fats).

International Fire Code received more than 250 proposals during its ROP cycle. Some thirteen proposals directly

Occupancies	Extinguishers	Exceptions
New Assembly	Y	
Existing Assembly	Y	
New & Existing Educations	N	
Day Care	N	
New Health Care	Y	
Existing Health Care	Y	
New Ambulatory Health Care	Y	
Existing Ambulatory Health Care	Y	
New Detention	Y	**
Existing Detention	Y	**
New Hotel & Dormitory	Y	*
Existing Hotel & Dormitory	Y	*
New Apartment	Y	*
Existing Apartment	Y	*
New Residential Board & Care	Y	
Existing Residential Board & Care	Y	*
New Mercantile	Y	
Existing Mercantile	Y	
New Business	Y	
Existing Business	Y	
Industrial & Storage	N	

* Portable fire extinguishers installed in hazardous areas when sprinklers are installed
** Portable fire extinguishers shall be permitted to be located at staff locations only

Occupancies	Extinguishers	Exceptions
Assembly	Y	
Educational	Y	*
Day Care	Y	
Health Care	Y	
Ambulatory Health Care	Y	
Detention	Y	**
Hotel & Dormitory	Y	*
Apartment	Y	*
Residential Board & Care	Y	
Mercantile	Y	
Business	Y	
Industrial & Storage	Y	

* Portable fire extinguishers installed in hazardous areas
** Portable fire extinguishers shall be permitted to be located at staff locations only

affected fire protection products, but it would be impossible to review all the proposals in this space. Some highlights include:

- ◆ 904.11.5.1: When hazard areas include multiple deep fat fryers, one listed Class K extinguisher of a minimum 6 L capacity shall be provided for up to four fryers of maximum 80 lb. capacity each. Additional listed Class K extinguishers of minimum 6 L capacity shall be provided for every additional four fryers having a maximum capacity of 80 lb. each.
- ◆ 904.11.5.2: All solid fuel appliances, whether or not under a hood, with fireboxes of 0.14 m³ volume or less shall at least have a 9 L K rated wet chemical fire extinguisher or two 6 L.

In addition, NFPA 101, *The Life Safety Code* and NFPA 5000, *The Building Code* shared the same revision cycle. There was a concerted effort to get these two documents in agreement with each other. Of the hundreds of proposals that were received, I am happy to report that none of these affected fire

extinguishers. These codes do not contain a requirement chart as they are broken out by occupancies. We have taken the liberty of drafting what a chart would look like after reviewing the various sections. These are provided for reference only; actual requirements can be found within the appropriate code document.

All of the code requirements mentioned that are in place or will be in place in the coming months have made for an exciting year for our industry. Positive code requirements within these core codes and standards have given new life to the fire equipment marketplace and will significantly change the landscape in the years to come.

A couple of factors have contributed to the evolution of these codes. First, the trend toward removing passive fire protection from the codes seems to be subsiding. And secondly, reports on fires, such as the one recently released by the NIST investigation on the Rhode Island station nightclub fire, are helping to re-enforce that proper placement, signage,

availability, and training on fire extinguishers can make a world of difference.

FEMA is committed to and continues to be proactive within the code world. FEMA believes it is imperative to play a role at the forefront of any discussions that concern passive fire protection within a building. A more balanced approach to fire protection is a positive step towards saving lives and protecting property through a life saving chain of survival—especially when every minute counts. ❖

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