



STATE FIRE MARSHAL
Automatic Extinguishing Systems Advisory Committee
September 11, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Office of the State Fire Marshal
2251 Harvard Street, Sacramento CA 95819
First Floor, Redwood Conference Room

COMMITTEE GOAL

To provide a means of communication between the Office of the State Fire Marshal, representatives of industry, the public and the fire service; and to seek comments and specific views on proposed regulations and intended future action.

OSFM STAFF

Al Adams, Committee Chairperson, OSFM
Kemiko Tolon, OSFM
Patricia Setter, OSFM
Elena Rich, OSFM
Jennifer Reiss, OSFM
Kevin Chan, OSFM
Nissa Harvey, OSFM
Dan Scott, OSFM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Allen Quirk, CALSAFE
Bruce Lecair, NFSA
Wayne Weize, AFSA
Chip Lindley, Lindley Fire Protection
Jason McBroom, Alpine Fire Protection District
Stan Smith, Local 483
Jamie Knowles, Amerex
Jack Thacker, Allan Automatic Sprinkler Corporation
Jeff Awtery, California American Fire Sprinkler Association (CAFSA)
Edie Wade, Brooks Equipment
James Feld, University of California, Berkeley (retired)

Todd Golden, Sprinkler Fitters Association of California (alternate)
Jose Colin, Woodland Fire Department (Arrived 9:56 a.m.)
Randy Dysart, CALSAFE (alternate)

MEMBERS ABSENT

Jason Hudgins, Walschon Fire Protection
Darrell Hefley, CALSAFE (alternate)
Bryan Jonson, West Sacramento Fire Department
Randy Roxson, Sprinkler Fitters Association of California

PUBLIC GUESTS

Top Meyers, Asurio
Laura Skidgel, Asurio
Vahe Zohrabian, Hydraulic Fire Protection
Bahman Brian Shahangian, California Fire Protection Coalition
John Holmes, Local 709
Rik Drury, Local 709
Terry Householder, General Underground Fire Protection
Paulene Norwood, California American Fire Sprinkler Association
Kim Stocking, Advanco Fire Protection
Rigoberto Vasquez, Advanco Fire Protection
Ted Hakimi, Quality Fire Protection
Peter Hulin, Superior Automatic Sprinkler Company

I. Call to Order

a. Welcome

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Al Adams, at 9:32 a.m. (Pacific Daylight Time) on September 11, 2019.

b. Roll Call/Determine Quorum

Roll call was conducted by Dan Scott and Chairperson Adams determined that a quorum of members was present. All attendees introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Edie Wade and seconded by Wayne to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on June 12, 2019. The minutes as amended were approved unanimously with a few minor corrections to clarify spelling. Chairperson Al Adams noted that all agendas would be posted to the OSFM website after they are approved by the committee.

c. Announcements

Chairperson Al Adams welcomed the guests who were attending the meeting to participate and contribute their opinion. He also noted that the AES program added several new staff members. The AES Program Coordinator Kemiko Tolon introduced Elena Rich and Nissa Harvey. Chairperson Al Adams also noted that two new Deputy State Fire Marshals are assigned primarily to the AES program, Brice Bennett in

Northern California and Mike Goth in Southern California, who will act as technical experts to the Committee and as inspectors and investigators in the field. He also noted that OSFM plans to add another Deputy to the program.

Chairperson Al Adams said that the AES Program is generally up-to-date in processing the backlog of applications and that they are working towards phasing out the historical recognition phase which Patricia Setter had been managing. Kemiko Tolon estimates that there are 4,000 AES Fire Sprinkler Fitters Certifications.

Chairperson Al Adams announced that OSFM has hired a new staff member with the sole purpose of improving the GOVMotus system with the goal of making it effective and user-friendly for all users. He also said that the updates to the AES certification exam resulted in increased pass rates for commercial certification. The next step is to improve the Multi-Family Residential program, which still faces high failure rates despite focusing the exam material and shortening the exam. Previously, OSFM believed that there was no apprenticeship program for Multi-Family Residential fitters, Stan Smith of Local 483 and John Holmes of Local 709 said that their organizations both offered this apprenticeship. Vahe Zohrabian pointed out that there was no non-union option. Peter Hulin said that if there are only 100 applicants for this certification, then OSFM needs to find out why more people are not applying. Chip Lindley suspects that AHJs are not asking for proof of these certifications at the same level that they ask for commercial certifications.

Chairperson Al Adams states that OSFM will be issuing several Information Bulletins to better educate AHJs about the AES regulations. Wayne Wieze asked for clarification about the CEU requirement and how providers would be approved. OSFM said that this would be covered in an Information Bulletin and that 30 hours would be required at renewals every three years. There are four approved CEU providers on the OSFM website and seven more pending approval. The CEU regulations are being updated to widen the provider requirements to increase the number of possible providers.

II. OLD BUSINESS

a. Title 19, Chapter 5.5 clean-up

OSFM has identified 20-25 items in the Chapter 5.5 regulations which need updating or clarification. Chip Lindley agreed to chair the workgroup to provide OSFM their recommendations on this and will schedule meetings in Fall 2019 to have recommendations back to OSFM in December 2019.

Chairperson Al Adams said that OSFM has developed an Information Bulletin to clarify the timetables for Continuing Education Units (CEU). As discussed at the previous meeting, the first renewal where CEU would be

required is July 1, 2021. It will be publicly posted after the OSFM Executive staff approves it. CEU providers and classes will be posted to the OSFM website separately. Peter Hulin asked for confirmation that there were no required classes, OSFM staff agreed. Chairperson Al Adams said that members of the public could contact Committee members if they wanted to offer suggestions.

b. NFPA 25 Workgroup Recommendations Report

Members of the three Workgroups reported on their progress.

Bruce Lecair presented on behalf of all three workgroups which compared the 2017 version and the draft of the 2020 version of NFPA 25 to determine what needed to be added to Title 19 of the California Code of Regulations to align them with national standards. All content submitted was vetted and finalized by the three workgroups for presentation to the Committee and to have a Committee vote to recommend these changes to OSFM for a future regulatory package. Two of the three workgroups did not have many significant recommendations outside of the national standards, the workgroup led by James Feld had several.

Recommended changes included adding several definitions. Automatic inspection and testing was a topic that was discussed extensively at several meetings. The workgroup recommended that electronic monitoring, automated inspection and any equipment used for this purpose be allowed at the discretion of the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) as defined in California, which is a narrower definition than NFPA. Sprinklers installed in accessible concealed spaces shall be inspected during the five-year inspection. Missing oversize rings/seismic plates shall be replaced. There was a discussion of unsprinklered areas, which was also extensively discussed in several workgroup meetings; it was discontinued when the Committee could not come to an agreement about how these areas are addressed on inspection forms and who was responsible for enforcing regulations on these areas. Jack Thacker brought up the need for signs for sprinkler cabinets which was voted down at a previous workgroup meeting and was not included in these recommendations. A diagram from NFPA 14 on different options for standpipe testing was added. Testing on pre-action systems was added.

There was a Committee discussion about whether to vote on the package or to remove the section on unsprinklered areas before voting.

Chip Lindley moved to vote on the package, Stan Smith seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with 11 voting yes, one voting no and no member abstaining. James Feld explained that he voted no because he felt that he was not given the opportunity to sufficiently review all documents created by all workgroups, particularly workgroup #3.

Chairperson Al Adams thanked the Committee for their hard work. The Committee will submit their work to OSFM and include statements of reason to help develop the regulations package.

c. Alternatives to certification process.

Chairperson Al Adams reminded the Committee that at the June meeting, they decided to continue a discussion on the grandfathering of certifications. He stated that we would have this discussion after lunch. The Committee members would speak first, followed by members of the public.

The Committee reconvened after lunch. Chief Al Adams again introduced the topic by reminding the Committee that at the previous meeting in June, the Committee voted to discuss the historical recognition of Fire Sprinkler Fitter Certification as some individuals claimed they were never notified of this process and missed out on the opportunity to receive certification based upon their previous experience. He did not know how many people were in this population, but earlier discussions at the meeting cited that there are approximately 2600 C-16 license holders and 4,000 Certified Sprinkler Fitters in California. He asked the Committee members to speak first, and then would invite public comment.

Deputy Patricia Sutter she estimated there were hundreds of individuals who have made this claim, predominantly coming from non-unionized workers.

III. NEW BUSINESS

a NFPA 25/ Title 19 forms

Kemiko Tolon introduced Top Meyers and Laura Skidgel from Asurio who previously created and updated Title 19 forms for OSFM. She also said that all forms on State of California websites must now be ADA compliant, which is why forms are currently not on the OSFM website. Bruce Lecair briefly explained what these requirements are.

Top Meyers discussed what he thought these forms may look like and how to design them, but was still looking into it and OSFM was still clarifying the requirements with the State of California. He will continue to work with OSFM staff on this.

b Inspection of NFPA 13d Systems

Bruce Lecair acknowledged that this has been discussed among industry groups, possibly as part of resale inspections or attached to other requirements, such as permit applications.

Jack Thacker added that he does not professionally work in residential sprinklers, but had recently inspected five houses in his spare time and all

five houses would fail an inspection for a variety of reasons. He agreed that this was an important public safety concern.

Jose Colin said he was part of a coalition working on this topic and the City of Woodland has had this requirement for several years. He estimated that 70% of all houses fail when inspected as part of a re-sale. Chairperson Al Adams asked if this had been brought up with CAL Chiefs or other organizations. Jose said yes, but this issue is always limited by issues of private property. He offered the idea of attaching this inspection to different requirements, such as loans, insurance or sale. Bruce Lecair said that this program has also been offered to the California Association of Realtors with little interest. Jason McBroom said that he was also on this coalition and they were working to getting it added under the category of Life/Safety Equipment on inspections along with smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms. Vahe Zohrabian agreed that these testing requirements should exist.

Bruce Lecair asked the OSFM and their legal team to look into this issue and that the Committee should consider making a recommendation on this. He said there was a simple checklist developed in the past.

c NFPA 13 2022 correlation subcommittee

Bruce Lecair said that this was a task of the Committee in the past and that it was a worthwhile topic to discuss. Jack Thacker agreed that this was an issue of much discussion in 2007, it took many months. He asked if the goal was to create a California version of NFPA 13 as there is one for NFPA 25. Peter Hulin said that California can do better in this area and that it was something to be considered, but not in-depth. Chip Lindley asked if this would go beyond NFPA 13 amendments the Committee had already made, Al Adams said that he did not think so.

d Certification for installers of on-site underground mains

Jose Colin said that this was an issue as OSFM issued Information Bulletin 17-002 and was not sure what work this covered. Does this regulate from the riser/bottom flange up and exclude underground? Or does it cover more?

Jack Thacker said that this had been discussed in the past, it is included in underground/pipeline plans under NFPA 24. Wayne Weize said that he thought the intent was to start at the flange and that going beyond that could run into conflict with labor organizations. James Feld agreed that this could be difficult to implement. Chairperson Al Adams said that this should be revisited.

E Workgroups on NFPA 25/Title 19 issues

All of these topics were addressed earlier in the meeting, no additional workgroups on these topics are needed at this time.

IV. OPEN FORUM

Chairperson Al Adams brought up the topic of approving CEU providers. He said that the goal of having criteria would protect the industry and that Kemiko Tolon would distribute this criteria to the Committee for comment.

Stan Smith agreed that CEU classes should not cover basic information that sprinkler fitters should already know, but should have a higher expectation of knowledge.

Randy Dysart said that the Committee has not yet addressed specialty systems. Chairperson Al Adams said that we were not ready to address those yet, but would. Randy Dysart also asked about the format of inspection forms, as people needed the option to fill them in as needed, and locking forms would inhibit this. He also said that the OSFM website was missing past information such as Information Bulletins, Code Interpretations, etc., and he wanted to be sure this information would not be lost. Vahe Zohrabian agreed and also pointed out that past meeting minutes from 2015-2017 were not on the OSFM website. OSFM staff clarified that the AES Advisory Committee was not active at that time, the first meeting of this current Committee was December, 2018. He also asked about the criteria for CEUs, which OSFM is continuing to develop. Stan Smith asked if the currently approved CEU Providers are allowed to issue CEUs, Chairperson Al Adams said yes. He also thanked everyone for taking the time to attend this meeting and to participate in the process to make the program better and safer.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no additional public comment at this time.

VI. SCHEDULE FOR FUTURE MEETING

The next committee meeting is scheduled for December 11, 2019 at the OSFM office, 2251 Harvard Street, Sacramento, CA 95815.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Jason McBroom and seconded by Stan Smith. Chairperson Al Adams adjourned the meeting at 2:22 p.m. (Pacific Daylight Time).