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# **AUTOMATIC EXTINGUISHER SYSTEMS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

## **MEETING MINUTES – WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28TH, 2026, 9AM-12PM**

*Hybrid Committee Meeting*

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### **Meeting Location:**

#### **Office of the State Fire Marshal**

5th Floor, McKittrick Conference Room 512

37800 Kilroy Airport Way

Long Beach CA 90806

**Zoom Meeting ID:** 878 9009 7820

## **1. CALL TO ORDER**

### **A. Welcome and Logistics Briefing**

The meeting was called to order by Chief Brice Bennett at 9:04 AM. Chairperson Bennett reviewed Bagley-Keene requirements for committee members, meeting etiquette, and when the public attendees could make comments.

### **B. Committee Members Introduction and Roll Call**

Roll call was conducted by Alexander Rapphahn, and it was determined that a quorum (20 of 21) of members was present, two members arrived late.

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Brice Bennett, Committee Chairperson and Division Chief for Engineering and Investigations, OSFM

Jason McBroom, Alpine Fire Protection District

Jose Colin, Suisun City Fire Department

Chad Richardson, Los Angeles Fire Department

Randy Roxson, Sprinkler Fitters Association of California

David Karrick, California American Fire Sprinkler Association (CAFSA)

James Feld, University of California, Berkeley (retired)

Travis Tyler, California State University

Edie Wade, Brooks Equipment Company

James Knowles, Amerex

Allen Quirk, National Association of Fire Equipment Distributers (NAFED)

Peter Hulin, National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA)

Wayne Weisz, American Fire Sprinkler Association (AFSA)

Vahe Zohrabian, California Fire Protection Coalition

Matthew McCarrick, California Association of Life Safety & Fire Equipment (CALSAFE)

Shelley Merrell, Integrated Fire & Safety

Richard Eyssallenne, Black Bird Fire Protection

Kyle Howeel, Kimble & Co.

Brian Hutto, Schmidt Fire Protection

Jeff Dixon, Sprinkler Fitters Local 483

Amber Barrios, Associated Compliance & Training

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Ken Kwong, Sacramento City Fire Department

**C. Introduction of Non-Committee Members.**

All non-committee members introduced themselves.

**PUBLIC GUESTS**

David Lewandowski, Jorgensen Company/CalSafe  
 Julie Eyssallenne, Black Bird Fire Protection  
 Roy Afusia, Local 709  
 Roland Gutierrez, Local 709  
 Shawn Arballo, Local 709  
 Steven Miles, Local 483  
 Todd Barry, Local 669  
 Alicia Karrick, Pye-Barker Fire & Safety  
 Jon Joseph, Simon's Fire Protection/AFSA  
 Kevin Reinertson  
 Angelica Ramirez, AFSA  
 Liz Deutsch, General Underground Fire Protection  
 Rigo Vazquez  
 Will Fassler, Spears Manufacturing Company  
 Harl Buckridge, AAA Quality Services Inc  
 John Saya, Fire Safety First  
 Kim Stocking, Andservice101  
 Michelle Perez, CAFSA  
 Mike Klecker, Thorpe Design  
 Shawn Gray, Lund Pearson McLaughlin Fire Protection.  
 Randy Scoville

**OSFM STAFF**

Chief Daniel Berlant, State Fire Marshal  
 Chief Andrew Henning, Assistant Deputy Director  
 Chief Jeffrey Schwartz, Deputy State Fire Marshal III Supervisor  
 Patricia Rock, Committee Co-Chairperson and AES Program Coordinator  
 Terence Liszewski, FE Program Coordinator  
 Jennifer Reiss, FR Program Coordinator  
 Cortney Walker, Supervisor I  
 Larry Godbout, Supervisor I  
 Taylor Machado, Analyst I  
 Chris Dale, Analyst II  
 Alexander Rapphahn, Analyst I  
 Thoms Setnan, Analyst II

**D. Approval of Minutes for November 10th, 2025.**

Committee Co-Chairperson Patricia Rock asked for approval for the November 10th, 2025, meeting.

It was moved by Member Edie Wade to approve the minutes; motion seconded by Vahe Zohrabian. Motion was approved unanimously

#### **E. Announcements and Division Updates**

Chairperson Bennett introduced the new licensing and certification Supervisor I Larry Godbout and the new flame-retardant, chemicals, and fabrics program coordinator Jennifer Reiss.

Program Coordinator Rock reminded the committee that the any fire pump test certifications, Type A1, A2, or L licenses that had not been renewed were now expired and need to be renewed promptly. The sprinkler fitter renewal period began January 1<sup>st</sup> and goes until May 1<sup>st</sup>. Please ensure that all pictures uploaded to sprinkler fitter renewal applications follow the picture instructions, they will be rejected if they do not. The ruling did not remove the requirement to register or renew a sprinkler fitter license. Please remind sprinkler fitters that they must renew their certification/registration. Renewals must be submitted before May 2<sup>nd</sup> to avoid paying late fees.

### **2. OLD BUSINESS**

#### **A. IO Predict Workgroup**

Program Coordinator Rock stated that the new test bank from IO Predict is under review and they hope to put it in place soon.

#### **B. CEU Workgroup – Presenting Recommendations**

Member Amber Barrios stated that the group was recommending that the Continued Education Unit (CEU) requirement be changed from 3 units every 3 years to 1 unit every year. This would promote continuous education, prevent fitters from doing all their hours at the last minute, and make the CEU requirement easier to track. CEUs would be recognized as valid for 36 months so classes longer than 10 hours could be used for multiple renewal periods. They also recommend that CEU providers submit an annual certificate report to the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) to strength verification, reduce fraudulent certificates, and improve administrative efficiency.

Member David Karrick asked if there they had recommendations for limitations on safety versus training knowledge. Member Amber Barrios replied that they did not. Member Wayne Weisz asked if more than one unit was taken in a year, if it could roll over into the next year. Member Amber Barrios replied yes, they could and that CEU would be valid for 36 months from the issue date on the certificate. Member David Karrick asked if there was a suggestion for serialization of certificates. Member Amber Barrios replied that they had discussed it but decided to with providers submitting a

report to the OSFM of all certificates issued by them. Member David Karrick asked if a lack of submission would nullify the certificate. Member Amber Barrios replied that that was not discussed by the workgroup. Workgroup member Steven Miles added that if the submitted certificate did not match the report provided to the OSFM, a quick phone call to the provider could verify its authenticity. Workgroup member Shawn Arballo added stated that they did discuss a living document that could be updated by the providers but how that would work is up to the OSFM. Chairperson Bennett replied that there are mandated IT rules that must be followed and the OSFM systems have limitations. They would need to do some evaluations and see what is actually feasible.

Member Vahe Zohrabian asked if the CEU providers had been involved in the workgroup decision making and recommendation process. Member Amber Barrios replied that joining the workgroup was voluntary and multiple CEU providers were part of it. Member Vahe Zohrabian asked if every provider on the approved CEU provider list was notified of these recommendations and asked for their input. Member Amber Barrios replied that the next logical step was consulting the providers, but the goal of the workgroup was to discuss the issues. Program Coordinator Rock added they wanted to get the committee's support for the recommendations and any changes they wanted to recommend before they started contacting all the CEU providers.

Public Guest David Lewandowski asked if a person did two 8-hour classes in one year if the additional 6 hours would be valid to use next year. Member Amber Barrios replied that they would. Public Guest David Lewandowski asked how they would keep track of the hours submitted for one years CEU requirement and the hours that were still valid for use the next year. Member Amber Barrios replied that the logistics of rolling over CEUs will be discussed if the recommendation moves forward. Chairperson Bennett asked if the workgroup could provide a summary of the recommendations to the committee members so that they can review them and vote on this topic at the next meeting. Member Amber Barrios said they would.

#### **C. 365 Day Licensure**

Peter Hulin asked to have this topic moved to the next meeting.

#### **D. License Hold Options**

Member Vahe Zohrabian if an on-hold status for sprinkler fitter licenses could be created for people that need to leave the industry for a while but still want to maintain their license. It would apply to apprentice and certified fitters, they would still need to renew their license every year, but fitters would not need to provide CEUs.

Chairperson Bennett asked for the committee's input to figure out how to make something like this work and what problems could arise from doing this. Member David Karrick asked if they were talking about a certification on a hold status or an

unemployed person continuing to renew their license. Member Vahe Zohrabian replied that it would be the same way the Contractors State License Board (CSLB) has inactive license statuses. Member David Karrick asked if a certification on this status would be considered inactive and could not work or perform inspections to which Member Vahe Zohrabian agreed. Member David Karrick asked if this would drop the requirement of a certification being tied to a C-16 and the CEU requirement. Member Vahe Zohrabian replied that a license would still have to be maintained. Member Amber Barrios added that they disagree with this idea regarding apprentices because an apprentice must be enrolled in an apprenticeship program as required by regulations. Their program notifies the OSFM when someone has left the apprenticeship program so that apprentice's registration can be placed on hold. Member Vahe Zohrabian replied that the main reason behind this is because getting a new sprinkler fitter certification after it expires can be difficult. Members Wayne Weisz and Matthew McCarrick asked if the person on inactive status only had to pay for their renewals and not submit CEUs. Member Vahe Zohrabian replied that they would have to pay their renewal fees and submit CEUs if they were required when they wanted to reactivate their license.

Chairperson Bennett asked if the proposed process would be the same as CSLB handles inactive licenses and Member Vahe Zohrabian confirmed that was correct. Member Amber Barrios asked if a person was to go into the inactive or hold status for more than 6 years, would they have to submit 30 or 60 hours of CEUs. Currently people submitting multi-year renewals only have to submit 30 hours of CEUs even if they have missed two CEU requirements. Member Vahe Zohrabian replied that getting CEUs is not difficult and they need to make a reasonable decision on that with the goal of assisting fitters in maintaining their certification. Member Chad Richardson asked if this issue was a major problem in the industry or an anomaly. Member Vahe Zohrabian replied that it is a safety feature to allow fitters to maintain their licenses and maintain the number of certified sprinkler fitters in the program. Member Chad Richardson recommended putting a time limit on how long a license can be inactive for. Member Vahe Zohrabian replied that they previously suggested a limit. Chairperson Bennett stated that this topic has had enough discussion to warrant the program looking into creating a framework that they can bring to the committee for further discussion. Public Guest Shawn Arballo added that they would like to see consequences for someone caught working on an inactive license be added. Chairperson Bennett stated that the priority of the staff was the regulations package, but they will try to have the concept ready for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter meeting, but it may not be a topic for discussion until the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter meeting.

Member Peter Hulin stated that they needed to be following the letter of the law and Title 19 and asked if sprinkler fitter certifications were being issued without providing CEUs. Chairperson Bennett replied that they were not. Member Randy Roxson asked

Member Amber Barrios if they had stated that individuals were getting their certifications without providing CEUs. Member Amber Barrios replied that fitters performing a multi-year renewal were only required to submit 30 hours of CEUs even if two CEU requirements had passed. The regulation states that after a certification has been expired for 1 year, person must apply for a new certification. Chairperson Bennett stated that based on previous recommendations from the committee, decisions were made to benefit the sprinkler fitters regarding expired certifications at the time. As they move forward with the regulation package they will reestablish the guidelines.

**E. Completed Apprenticeship requirement for employer to verify hours**

Member David Karrick proposed removing the employer verification of hours and using the proof of apprenticeship completion as the verification of hours. This would require the verification of each program standards to ensure that they meet or exceed the requirements in the regulations. Apprenticeship programs cannot be completed without meeting the hours requirement and asking for both proof of completion and an employer verification of hours is asking for documents that confirm the same thing.

Member Vahe Zohrabian asked if this would require asking all the apprenticeship program to prove their hours required for completion of the program. Member David Karrick replied that it would be because some DOL apprenticeship's hours required for completion do not meet the hours required in the regulations. It would be a one time ask for the programs and going forward their proof of completion would be acknowledged as meeting the hours requirement. Member Vahe Zohrabian asked why apprenticeship programs would need to change their hours after receiving approval from the Division of Labor (DOL) or Department of Industrial Relations (DIR). Member David Karrick replied that they were not asking for apprenticeship program to change. The proposal was to remove the employer verification of hours and use the proof of completion of an apprenticeship program as the hour's verification to meet the regulation requirements. This would require a one-time verification of the standards of each apprenticeship program. Not all apprentices have the same employer for their whole apprenticeship, and some employers do not want to provide hours verifications. Using W-2 is not something that the OSFM seems interested in using because of possible personal privacy issues.

Member Vahe Zohrabian introduced information that was not relevant to the current discussion topic and Chairperson Bennett redirected the conversation back to the agenda item

Member Amber Barrios stated that to get their program listed with the OSFM, they had to send in a copy of their standards. Those standards list the hours required for their program. A DOL approved program must also meet California standards.

Member David Karrick stated that a program that for a program that requires less than 7000 hours, a proof of hours letter could still be submitted to meet the California standard. But for programs that meet that standard, a letter should be required. They are not looking to nullify apprenticeship programs but remove duplicity in the regulations.

Member Matthew McCarrick asked if the goal of this was to remove the employer reporting on the job training hours to the apprenticeship programs. Member Amber Barrios replied that it was not, it is to remove the proof of employment hours letter from the sprinkler fitter application. Member David Karrick added that the proof of completion of an apprenticeship program could serve as the completion of hours.

Member Chad Richardson made the motion to explore this topic as a committee and develop a workgroup if necessary. Member Wayne Weisz seconded the motion. A vote was taken to pass or reject the motion. The Motion passed with 19 approvals, 1 abstain, and 1 member absent.

Chairperson Bennett stated that the OSFM would prepare a staff report for the committee to continue this discussion.

Member Peter Hulin asked what category would a person be in if they had graduated from an apprenticeship that only required 3000 hours but still needed 4000 hours to meet the California requirements to become a sprinkler fitter. Chairperson Bennett stated that that was an excellent question and something that should be gone over when the committee discusses this topic further.

#### **F. Workgroup Presentation of NFPA 25 2026 adoption with amendments**

Member David Karrick stated that they had received no questions from the committee based on the workgroup suggested NFPA 25 2026 amendments that were provided to them after the November meeting other than from Member James Feld. The committee was asked if they had any questions about the suggested amendments. Member Jason McBroom stated that based on their conversation with Member Feld, they would like to amend one of sections they worked on. In Section 6.3.1.1 they would like to strike out the word "automatic" from automatic standpipe systems so that the text would refer to all types of standpipe systems.

Member James Feld had multiple questions about the suggested amendments. Chairperson Bennett replied that proper time and attention needed to be taken to review and address the detailed questions raised by Member Feld. Member David Karrick asked if Member Feld would join the workgroup so they could review his questions together and properly address them, Member James Feld agreed. Member David Karrick stated they would work with the OSFM staff to schedule time for the workgroup to meet. Chairperson Bennett asked if the workgroup could address the

questions raised by Member Feld, other provided by committee members, and then provide an updated document for the committee to vote on at the next meeting. Member David Karrick replied that they would work to meet that goal. They reminded the committee that this topic was voted on by the committee, the document they create will not be the final product, they are not removing the AES, and there is a lot more to this process that will need to be accomplished in the future. Chairperson Bennett added that while discussing the questions, the work group should be thinking about “problem, purpose, and rationales” for each amendment to make the future regulation updates easier.

Member Vahe Zohrabian asked if a compliance engine could be added to the regulations package. Chairperson Bennett replied that the OAL would not allow any business type to be put into the regulations. Member Shelley Merrell stated that once the AES forms were approved, they had planned to work with BRYCER to make sure that they had the correct format. Member Chad Richardson replied that BRYCER is just a tracking program. It is up to the authority having jurisdiction AHJ to decide what forms they are going to use. Once the forms are adopted by the committee or the state, they would tell BRYCER what forms they need to put into their program.

Chief Andrew Henning thanked the workgroup and the committee for their efforts on this topic and noted that, following the transition to the national standard with amendments, adopting future editions of NFPA 25 should be more streamlined. Chief Daniel Berlant provided an overview of the regulatory process and ongoing updates to Title 19, including improvements to the AES Program, the outcome of the recent lawsuit, efforts to recodify the sections removed by the court, the history of the program, and its future direction. He noted that the FEI Division has identified 11 key initiatives to guide future progress, six of which directly support the AES Program. These initiatives include updating Title 19 regulations, reviewing the electronic licensing and certification application system, developing ITM certifications, expanding enforcement of licensing and certification requirements, enhancing communication efforts, and strengthening test bank validation and exam delivery processes. Chief Berlant also shared that the current administration continues to encourage state agencies to support apprenticeship opportunities. He acknowledged that the next administration will determine the future State Fire Marshal. Chief Berlant thanked the committee members, AHJs, industry representatives, and members of the public for their continued dedication and contributions to these meetings.

Member Chad Richardson stated that going forward with this topic, the workgroup and committee, should include the CALFIRE Code Development team to ensure that any changes or amendments are reflected across the California fire code. Chief Andrew Henning stated that they will work closely with the code analyst team to update chapter 80 and 35. When they look at the 2029 edition they will evaluate if it still

needs to be printed in the building standards. They will include the committee, fire protection officers and California fire chiefs' association when making this decision. Public guest and NFPA 25 workgroup member Shawn Arballo added that the workgroup understands that adopting NFPA 25 would require changes to title 19. Chief Andrew Henning stated that they would repeal the section of title 19 with the old amendments and replace or modify them with new ones recommended by the workgroup. Keeping the amendments to 1 or 2 pages will make this process easier from a regulatory standpoint and for disrupting the new information to the AHJs and FPOs.

### **3. NEW BUSINESS**

No new business.

### **4. ROUNDTABLE**

Member Jim Feld asked if the OSFM was planning on appealing the lawsuit judgement. Chief Daniel Berlant replied that they will not be appealing, they are working on recodifying what was stricken in the judgement and adding a few additional items. Member Jim Feld asked if a trainee could remain a trainee indefinitely. Chief Daniel Berlant replied that the judge struck the past language for the limit on how long a person could remain a trainee. They are working on a regulation update to add the language back in to title 19. Member Jim Feld inquired about the purpose of the lawsuit and asked Member Vahe Zohrabian for clarification. Chief Daniel Berlant reminded the committee that any communication with the plaintiffs should occur on personal time. He noted that the OSFM is adhering to the judge's ruling and is preparing a regulations package to recodify the sections that were removed. Member Vahe Zohrabian added that the judge's ruling is publicly available and affirmed their commitment to the goals and responsibilities of the committee.

Matthew McCarrick asked why sprinkler fitter fees are \$170.00 and require 5 years of training but the fire extinguisher fees are \$185.00 and only require 90 days of training. Chief Andrew Henning replied that fees are based on the costs of the program and staff, they also perform fee updates to evaluate the costs for each license, certification, and registration. Chief Daniel Berlant added that the fees in each program are only meant to cover the cost of the program, not create a profit. Additionally, the money from each program can only be used on that program. The process of raising fees is required to meet the costs of the program and allow them to run at a 2026 standard.

### **5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Public Guest Harl Buckridge asked if a worker that has been trained by a pipe fitter, is competent, and can do the work as a trainee may do so without out a pipe fitter being on site. Chairperson Bennett replied that per the judge's removal of the regulations, that is correct. Program Coordinator Rock added that the person must be a registered trainee. Public Guest David Lewandowski asked if there had been a large increase in trainees

since January. Program Coordinator Rock replied that there was only a small increase in trainees, about 5 or 6. Member Amber Barrios stated that they have seen a reduction in apprenticeship enrollment and has had some companies misinterpreted the information bulletin and informed their employees that they no longer require sprinkler fitter cards.

**6. UPCOMING MEETING DATES FOR 2026**

April 22nd, 2026, 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM Pacific Daylight Time (PDT)  
California Natural Resources Building 2nd Floor Conference Room 02-201,  
715 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

**7. MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved by Member Allen Quirk to adjourn the meeting, motion seconded by Member Edie Wade; all in favor of adjournment. Chairperson Bennett adjourned the meeting at 10:54A.M. PDT.