



STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Automatic Extinguishing Systems Advisory Committee

October 26, 2022, Meeting Minutes, 9:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M.

Pacific Daylight Time (PDT)

Office of the State Fire Marshal

Zoom Meeting Conference Call

Meeting ID: 210 520 3211

MEMBERS PRESENT

Allen Quirk, California Association of Life Safety and Fire Equipment (CALSAFE)

Peter Hulin, National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA)

Wayne Weisz, American Fire Sprinkler Association (AFSA)

Randy Roxson, Sprinkler Fitters Association of California

Randy Dysart, National Association of Fire Equipment Distributors (NAFED)

Chip Lindley, Lindley Fire Protection

Darrell Hefley, Jorgenson Company

Shelley Merrell, Integrated Fire & Safety

Todd Golden, Sprinkler Fitter Local 709

Jeff Awtrey, California American Fire Sprinkler Association (CAFSA)

Edie Wade, Brooks Equipment Company

James Feld, University of California, Berkeley (retired)

Jason Hudgins, Walschon Fire Protection, Inc.

Steven Fox, Sprinkler Fitters and Apprentices, Local 483 (Alternate)

Bruce Lecair, American Fire Sprinkler Association (AFSA) (Alternate)

MEMBERS ABSENT

Jason McBroom, Alpine Fire Protection District

Bryan Jonson, West Sacramento Fire Department

Jeff Dixon, Sprinkler Fitters and Apprentices, Local 483

OSFM STAFF

Greg Andersen, Committee Chairperson, OSFM

Brice Bennett, Co-Chairperson, OSFM

Kemiko Tolon, OSFM

Daniel Berlant, OSFM

Ernie Paez, OSFM
Megan Lopes, OSFM

PUBLIC GUESTS

John Holmes, Sprinkler Fitters, Local 709
Gary Arakelian, Project/Construction Manager
Amber Barrios, Associated Compliance & Training
David Karrick, Aegis Fire Systems
Jon Joseph, Symons Fire Protection
Carla Distrola, General Underground Fire Protection
James Knowles, Amerex and CALSAFE
David Lewandowski, Jorgenson Company
Drew Slocum, Inspect Point Software
Alicia Karrick, AFSA
Vahe Zohrabian, California Fire Protection Coalition
Matthew McKarrick, CALSAFE
Ted Hakimi, California Fire Protection Coalition
Jon Saia, Fire Safety First
Jeffrey Halpert, SCFPO E&D

I. Call to Order

A. Welcome

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Greg Andersen, at 9:31 A.M. PDT on October 26, 2022.

B. Roll Call/Determine Quorum

Roll call was conducted by Kemiko Tolon and it was determined that a quorum (12 of 16) of members was present.

C. Introductions

All attendees introduced themselves.

D. Approval of Minutes

Chairperson Greg Andersen asked for approval of the minutes for the July 27, 2022 meeting.

It was moved by Member Edie Wade to approve the minutes; motion seconded by Member Shelley Merrell. Motion was unanimously approved at 9:44 A.M. PDT.

E. Announcements

Chairperson Greg Andersen welcomed everyone to the meeting. He announced GOVMotus will now allow for payment prior to submittal of CEUs so a late fee is not incurred, however, it will be placed on hold until CEUs are submitted. This will help sprinkler fitters avoid late charges; however, their license will be placed on hold until the CEUs are completed and submitted.

Chairperson Greg Andersen announced Member Jeff Awtrey will be stepping down from the committee for the next cycle. He expressed appreciation for Jeff's work on the committee.

Chairperson Greg Andersen stated this item is not on the agenda for this meeting, however it will be on the agenda for the next meeting when there will be new appointments for advisory committee members. He stated we will be looking to form a workgroup for phase two of the regulations process. Member James Feld asked what phase two was. Chairperson Greg Andersen responded phase two will be regarding maintenance. The first phase was for certification and the next phase is whether service and maintenance will require a certification. Member Chip Lindley asked when is the plan to start this workgroup, after the first meeting of the year? Chairperson Greg Andersen responded yes, in the first meeting of next year we will work to form a workgroup that will come up with a proposal to present to the committee. He understood that it will take some time and would like to get the process started. Member Wayne Weisz asked if this was for a certification program for inspectors? Chairperson Greg Andersen responded it is not for inspectors, but for service. The workgroup will be discussing the scope of this. He further stated when this idea was initially presented there was emphasis on whether it should be for service, maintenance, and potentially testing. Member James Feld stated when this was initially discussed pre-COVID phase two was potentially going to include certification and registration for underground fire mains contractors. Chairperson Greg Andersen stated this is something that can be discussed in the workgroup on what should be included. Alternate Steve Fox asked how to show interest in being in the workgroup. Chairperson Greg Andersen stated at the next meeting and via email.

Guest Gary Arakelian asked if the plumbing contractors that do underground work are C-16 license holders? Member Chip Lindley confirmed it was a C-34 license. Guest Gary Arakelian stated the plumbers then are not as aware of the fire codes as a C-16 holder. Chairperson Greg Andersen stated this is where the hurdles are for underground and where one license begins and another ends with fire protection systems. Guest Gary Arakelian stated underground work is covered under the C-16 license. Chairperson Greg Andersen stated the scope of each license will be confirmed with the State Contractor's Board. He continued to state these are the issues that will be discussed in the upcoming workgroup for this topic. Alternate Steve Fox further elaborated that this workgroup will be working on service and maintenance, while inspections were handled in the previous workgroup. Chairperson Greg Andersen agreed that is where the focus should be placed.

Chief Daniel Berlant thanked everyone for their service on the committee and toward the regulation packages. He stated he is looking forward to future hybrid options for meetings and getting to see people in person.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. Partial Sprinklers

Chairperson Greg Andersen presented this topic to the group and stated this is an old item that can now be removed. He opened the floor for any questions.

Guest Jeff Halpert stated the name of the item is misleading as it should be called Limited Area Sprinkler Systems. He stated they are waiting for the next step in the regulatory process to encode the language. Member James Feld confirmed the new package does use the correct language.

B. Regulations Development

i. Chapter 5.5 Language

Chairperson Greg Andersen stated the package is with Code Development and Analysis and is being worked on with staff for OAL submittal.

ii. Chapter 5 Language

Chairperson Greg Andersen stated there is a lot of work being done in the workgroup. He introduced Alternate Bruce Lecair, workgroup chair, to give an update to the committee on the workgroup's progress. Alternate Bruce Lecair stated three months ago the workgroup reconvened to review the package updating with the current NFPA 25 2020 edition. He commended everyone involved for their work, including Member Shelley Merrell on her work on the forms. He stated the final editing of the draft has been submitted for review by the committee. There is a lot of information to review, so the workgroup asked to hold a special meeting to show the AES committee what is in the package and review all changes.

Chairperson Greg Andersen agreed that it is important to give the committee members the time to review the information. He offered to hold a hybrid or in-person meeting in order to hold a vote at the January committee meeting. Alternate Bruce Lecair confirmed the workgroup also recommended holding a hybrid or in-person meeting.

Member Peter Hulin asked if this additional meeting would be held for committee members only? Co-chairperson Brice Bennett confirmed this would be committee members only as this is considered a workgroup meeting. Chairperson Greg Andersen elaborated that no voting will be taking place at the additional

workgroup meeting and will occur at the January committee meeting which is open to the public.

Chairperson Greg Andersen asked for a date to hold the workgroup meeting. The committee members settled on November 30, 2022, at 9:00 AM PDT. Chairperson Greg Andersen stated a conference room at the Sacramento location will be reserved and an invitation will be sent for a hybrid option.

Guest Gary Arakelian asked if this meeting was for committee members only. Chairperson Greg Andersen confirmed this meeting was for committee members only, however, the information will be sent out prior to the January committee meeting for public input at that time.

C. Forms

Chairperson Greg Andersen introduced the forms and extended a huge thanks to Member Shelley Merrell on the work on the forms. Member Shelley Merrell stated after the last workgroup meeting there were a few changes that were needing to be made including adding a checkbox for weekly or monthly inspection to the electric pump. There were a few more minor changes that have been completed. She stated all the forms have been added to a Drop Box for review. Member Shelley Merrell presented several forms to the group including how they were numbered, the capabilities of the forms, and information on them.

Guest Gary Arakelian asked if it was required to have the building owner's name on the form? Member Randy Dysart stated that may be valuable information to have. Member James Feld stated the name under the property information field should be the business name the contact information. Chairperson Greg Andersen asked if you would expect a field technician to know who the owner of a building is? Member Chip Lindley stated the owner's information may not be available to the tenant or contact person. Member Shelley Merrell asked if the AHJ's often refer back to the building department for that information. Member James Feld stated you would go through the building licensing department for owner's records for that city. Guest Gary Arakelian stated the information should be made available for the State Fire Marshal. Member Darrell Hefley stated these forms are not used by the SFM but the local AHJ. Member Chip Lindley stated he didn't see it being an issue. Chairperson Greg Andersen stated there could be a line on the form for the owner but not make this required information. Co-chairperson Bennett stated the committee will have an opportunity to review the documents again before presenting back out to the public. Chairperson Greg Andersen stated good discussion was had on this topic and thanked Member Shelley Merrell for her work. He also thanked all the members working on these regulations.

D. Non-Compliance Tag

Chairperson Greg Andersen stated this topic is pending a workgroup meeting. He opened the floor for comments. No comments were made.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. AES Advisory Committee Reappointment Letters

Chairperson Greg Andersen stated reappointment applications are under review. He also stated the charter will be updated to stagger appointments. No further comments were made.

B. 23-24 Continuing Education Units

Chairperson Greg Andersen reminded everyone that recertification for sprinkler fitters require CEUs. If you do not have them, you can reapply pending the CEUs. There is a maximum of 10 hours for safety courses. Member Chip Lindley asked how many sprinkler fitters were not able to recertify due to CEUs, and if it seems people are compliant. Chairperson Greg Andersen stated if they are not recertifying there is no way to hunt down their CEUs. Member Wayne Weisz asked if the 10 hours of safety training was moving forward. Kemiko Tolon stated this information was posted in the questions and answers and has been placed on the website. She reminded everyone to take the courses on the approved provider list, because they will be the only ones accepted. Guest Amber Barrios asked about the comment made earlier regarding the ability to pay for renewal prior to the CEUs being submitted. She asked if there was a timeframe for CEU submittal after payment, as most fitter's submit the renewal certification receipt to the employer. Chairperson Greg Andersen stated this is something that will need to be looked into. Member Jeff Awtrey asked regarding safety courses, if CPR was allowed. Chairperson Greg Andersen confirmed that is still true but limited to 10 hours.

C. Conditional Employment Letter

Chairperson Greg Andersen stated the letter of employment requirement will be expanded to conditional employment. No further questions or comments were made.

D. Apprentice Renewal

Chairperson Greg Andersen stated there is a conflict in the current regulations. For sprinkler fitters there is not a conflict. If you let your license expire you can apply as new applicant or pay the late fee. Member Darrell Hefley stated he understood the regulation to say if you are starting a new application your previous history could apply rather than graduation from an apprentice program. Chairperson Greg Andersen stated there is also no way around the CEU requirement. The issue in regulations is with the apprenticeship. There are two sections in the regulation that state if

you let it expire then you are starting over. Another section states when it expires you must renew and get everything current. He has directed the staff to process the recertification as they bring it in.

Guest Amber Barrios stated the issue she comes across quite often is apprentices who were previously enrolled in a program and want to renew but are not currently enrolled. She stated this is something that should be looked at within the program so people are not being renewed as apprentices when they are not currently enrolled as apprentices.

Guest John Holmes stated documentation should be requested for apprentices at the time of renewals. Chairperson Greg Andersen stated this is something that will be evaluated in upcoming regulations to see if a modification is needed.

E. FPO and Sprinkler Fitter Training

Co-Chairperson Brice Bennett stated education is continuing throughout the state with different fire protection officer organizations, most recently with the union houses. The OSFM has taken the opportunity to present information on the certification process and clear up any rumors that may be circulating in the field, such as only needing one certified fitter on a job sight. This requirement changed in 2019. Re-education will be ongoing to clear up any further misinformation.

Member Jeff Awtrey asked as far as enforcement, is the OSFM still working with CSLB regarding companies hiring unlicensed fitters. Co-chairperson Brice Bennett stated they will continue to work with CSLB to ensure they have the necessary information.

Member Jeff Awtrey also clarified that a grandfathered fitter who allowed their license to expire can reapply with their experience. Chairperson Greg Andersen stated he would have to look further into the regulations on the timeframes of the expired license and confirmed renewing with a late fee is always an option. Member Darrell Hefley stated regulation section 945 (e) covers this content, which allows a grandfathered fitter to take a test if they allow their license to lapse.

Member James Feld asked what the change was in 2019 regarding only having one certified fitter on a job sight. Co-chairperson Brice Bennett stated the regulation changed to anyone who touches sprinkler pipe needs a certification or registration card from the OSFM as a sprinkler fitter, trainee, or apprentice. Chairperson Greg Andersen clarified, the misinformation in the field is that only one person on the job site needs to be certified, where it actually is, one person must be certified and

everyone else handling sprinkler pipe must also be licensed or registered as a fitter, trainee, or apprentice.

Member Chip Lindley stated he has heard twice from two different inspectors at LADBS that there is a rumor that the entire program is going to shut down. He thought it would be worthwhile to reach out to LADBS. Co-chairperson Brice Bennett asked for the information, and he will reach out.

Guest Gary Arakelian asked why when hiring personnel, they must be licensed or registered with the OSFM to handle sprinkler pipe? Chairperson Greg Andersen stated this is a question as to why the whole program was started. It is to ensure there is a level of quality. Guest Gary Arakelian stated the C-16 is the one to ensure quality. Chairperson Greg Andersen stated this is a fundamental question to many of the programs. Guest Gary Arakelian stated the CSLB C-16 license holder has the responsibility to manage the job site. He also asked who gives the OSFM the authority to require licensure and registration of fitters. Chairperson Greg Andersen stated the legislation. He further stated this a fundamental question regarding legislation. Guest Gary Arakelian asked when does the SFM step in in the process. Chairperson Greg Andersen stated the SFM delegates authority to the AHJs.

IV. OPEN FORUM

No comment was made.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Guest Vahe Zohrabian stated an important point about NFPA 25 is regarding arc hazard. He stated this is an important safety hazard issue and the only person who is qualified to open this box is a C-10 licensed person. He stated unfortunately the way NFPA 25 and the informational bulletin is written, that this language is not clear. Chairperson Greg Andersen stated he will share his email and asked him to send the information.

Guest Vahe Zohrabian also stated he would like to see equality in education for apprenticeship programs. He stated if the quality is there for education the enforcement issues would be reduced and more time should be spent on education solutions.

Guest Gary Arakelian stated the level of education that was given in order to renew the certification was excessive. He also had issues with course providers. His concern is continuing education should be provided to learn about new ideas in the industry. Chairperson Greg Andersen agreed that some of the better classes are to educate on new changes in the field so everyone is current. He also stated that in the beginning the OSFM was lenient on continuing education courses, however, that is changing.

Member James Feld stated to address Guest Vahe Zohrabian's concern on arc flash, this is a valid concern. He stated NFPA 25 section 4.9 references NFPA 70E which is electrical safety. He believed this is how NFPA 25 addressed this issue.

Member Peter Hulin reminded everyone the program is self-funded and this is collected from fees associated with licensure and certification. This is why enforcement is important, because without enforcement there would be no program to function.

Guest Vahe Zohrabian stated the SFM has a vast budget, what he was talking about is fair game education and resources.

Alternate Steve Fox stated he does quite a bit of training with journeyman and apprentices, and he has had a good experience with the OSFM. There have been some growing pains as the program has been developed but that is normal. He appreciated everyone who has participated in making the program happen. Chairperson Greg Andersen stated this is why the advisory committee meetings are important, so glitches in the system can be recognized and discussed.

Guest Amber Barrios stated she agrees with Alternate Steve Fox's comment. She stated there are plenty of educational options that meet everyone's needs in the state.

Member Wayne Weisz stated he also agrees with Alternate Steve Fox's comments. He further stated a lot of the comments that have been made today are the same discussions that were had at the development of the program. He stated if you look there are a lot of training opportunities and effort that is made to develop a good program.

Guest Ted Hakimi stated regarding the budget and lack of money for the program, there are approximately 2,600 fire protection companies in California according to the state licensing board. He stated 80% are merit shops, and this should reflect in the representation in the AES committee. He stated there are a lot of merit shops that do not know about the program. If these companies were aware this would solve the budget problem. He stated one of the tasks of the committee should be to facilitate participation of merit shops in the program. He also stated we should make it easy for merit shops to be involved and to extend the grandfathering in of fitters. Chairperson Greg Andersen stated that applications for the advisory committee were recently opened, and he encourages anyone in the industry to apply as there will be another opportunity next year.

Member Shelley Merrell stated as a non-union contractor, she has many employees enrolled in ACT Educate and are having a great experience. She stated there are plenty of educational opportunities out there if you look for them.

Member Wayne Weisz thanked the OSFM for making an effort to include merit shops in the very first meeting regarding developing this program. He disagrees that the merit shop side of the equation was not represented. He also stated if you are a C-16 contractor in the state of CA and you do not yet understand that there is a fitter certification program that is a problem because it has been widespread advertised.

Member Peter Hulin stated there is equal representation of organizations across the state within the advisory committee.

Guest Gary Arakelian stated the program started because CSLB was not doing their job regarding maintenance.

Guest Vahe Zohrabian asked to be shown one apprenticeship program that is for non-union and can draw workers.

Member Jeff Awtrey stated CAFSA has a pool of apprentices available you just have to be a part of the program.

Chairperson Greg Andersen stated there is still a lot of emphasis on education and program development. He commends the committee for the tremendous amount of work that has been done and for everyone who has participated.

VI. SCHEDULE FOR FUTURE MEETING

The next Committee Meeting is scheduled for January 25, 2023.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Greg Andersen thanked everyone for their participation and asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

It was moved by Member Wayne Weisz to adjourn the meeting, motion seconded by Member Jason Hudgins; all in favor of adjournment. Chairperson Greg Andersen adjourned the meeting at 11:28 A.M. PDT.