



STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Automatic Extinguishing Systems Advisory Committee

April 27, 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

Wayne Weisz, American Fire Sprinkler Association (AFSA)

Chip Lindley, Lindley Fire Protection

James Feld, University of California, Berkeley (retired)

Darrell Hefley, Jorgenson Company

Edie Wade, Brooks Equipment Company

Peter Hulin, National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA)

Randy Roxson, Sprinkler Fitters Association of California

Shelley Merrell, Integrated Fire & Safety

Jason McBroom, Alpine Fire Protection District

Jeff Awtrey, California American Fire Sprinkler Association (CAFSA)

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

Bryan Jonson, West Sacramento Fire Department

Todd Golden, Sprinkler Fitter Local 709

Jeff Dixon, Sprinkler Fitters and Apprentices, Local 483

Jason Hudgins, Walschon Fire Protection, Inc.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT

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

OSFM STAFF

Al Adams, Committee Chairperson, OSFM

Kemiko Tolon, OSFM

Elena Rich, OSFM

Megan Lopes, OSFM

PUBLIC GUESTS

Amber Barrios, Associated Compliance & Training
Kim Stocking, Advanco Fire Protection
John Holmes, Sprinkler Fitter Local 709
Vahe Zohrabian, Hydraulic Fire Protection
Terry Householder, General Underground Fire Protection
Isaac Mendel, Livermore/Pleasanton Fire Department Fire Inspector
Jeff Bridges, So CAL AFSA
Jon Joseph, Symons Fire Protection
Medi Maldonado, City of Carlsbad Fire Department Fire Prevention Specialist
Michelle Perez, CAFSA
Pamela Schaal, CAFSA
Rick Drury, Sprinkler Fitters Local 483
Scott Coran, So CAL FPO
Shannon Sanders, City of Huntington Beach Fire Department
Steve Schwartz, Consolidated Fire Protection
Todd Stephens, Brown Company
Steven Fox, Sprinkler Fitters and Apprentices, Local 483
Jeff Halpert, TERP Consulting, So CAL FPO, Equipment Devices Committee
James Carver, So CAL FPO, Equipment Devices Committee
Rigoberto Vasquez, Advanco Fire Protection

I. Call to Order

A. Welcome

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Al Adams, at 9:35 A.M. PDT on April 27, 2022.

B. Roll Call/Determine Quorum

Roll call was conducted by Elena Rich and it was determined that a quorum (15 of 16) of members was present.

C. Introductions

All attendees introduced themselves.

D. Approval of Minutes

Chairperson Al Adams asked for approval of the minutes of the January 26, 2022 meeting.

It was moved by Member Edie Wade to approve the minutes as presented, motion seconded by Member Shelley Merrell. Motion was unanimously approved at 9:47 A.M. PDT.

E. Announcements

Chairperson Al Adams welcomed everyone to the meeting. He wanted to inform the group of staff changes in the OSFM. There is now a new Director of CAL FIRE Joe Tyler. Chief Daniel Berlant has also been promoted to Deputy Director of Community Wildfire Preparedness and

Mitigation. The OSFM also has a new Assistant Deputy Director Steve Hawks. Vikkie Franklin has been promoted to a Staff Service Manager II and will be transitioning out of the Fire Engineering & Investigations Division and overseeing administrative operations of the office. The interviews for the DSFM position in Southern California will begin, including the supervisor position replacing Vickie Sakamoto.

Chairperson Al Adams also stated he has been in contact with the California Contractors State License Board regarding enforcement related issues concerning sprinkler fitter certification. They offered to assist in enforcement. Chairperson Al Adams stated that the C-16 holder should be held responsible, in addition to the sprinkler fitter, for compliance with state regulations. He has hope that we can move forward with their support.

Chairperson Al Adams stated that this is the first year the OSFM has required CEUs for renewals. So far renewals have been progressing with few resolvable glitches in the GOVMOTUS system. Projections show that we are on track for renewals thus far in the process. The OSFM has made an effort to resolve any issues and respond to concerns in a timely manner. Chairperson Al Adams stated that they will continue to work with GOVMOTUS to make enhancements, so it is more user friendly. Kemiko Tolon agreed with the statements regarding renewals and GOVMOTUS.

Member Jeff Awtrey posed the question of how many renewals have been processed thus far. Chairperson Al Adams responded with approximately 2,000 and is hopeful that we will continue to be on track in the next few weeks.

Member Chip Lindley posed the question on how the collaboration in enforcement would potentially look with the state contractors board. Chairperson Al Adams stated that the first step may be to ensure that the C-16 contractor understands their responsibility in having workers that are certified sprinkler fitters, and as a consequence of sending out workers who are not certified, it will threaten their C-16 license.

Member Randy Dysart asked that as long as their renewals are submitted by the deadline and awaiting confirmation of CEUs by the program, that they will still not be charged a late fee. Chairperson Al Adams confirmed that they will not be charged a late fee as long as they submit by the deadline.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. Forms

Chairperson Al Adams introduced Member Shelley Merrell to speak on forms. Member Shelley Merrell stated that all forms are completed and

have been submitted to Co-Chairperson Brice Bennett. Member Shelley Merrell asked the committee members to please notify her of any changes that need to be addressed. Chairperson Al Adams asked about forms regarding partial sprinkler systems and Member Shelley Merrell responded that this is something she will look into. Chairperson Al Adams stated he will ensure Co-Chairperson Brice Bennett disperses all forms to committee members for review.

Chairperson Al Adams opened the floor for questions from committee members. Member Chip Lindley complimented Member all efforts on the forms and asked about any talks with the compliance engine on implementation of the forms. Member Shelley Merrell has not yet spoken to them and believes this may be more of an issue for Co-Chairperson Brice Bennett to address. Member Edie Wade also complimented her efforts on the forms. Member James Feld questioned the forms in regard to having a separate or combined form for Wet and Dry Standpipes, as well as, a form for the annual and/or monthly water storage tanks. Member Shelley Merrell stated that she would investigate. Chairperson Al Adams questioned whether the goal was to have separate forms or combined forms. Member Shelley Merrell stated that the committee opted to combine the forms. Member James Feld also mentioned that when the changes to Chapter 5 in the regulations are completed, the NFPA numbers will need to be updated in the forms. Member Shelley Merrell confirmed that she will keep an eye on these changes and be in contact to ensure all issues are corrected.

B. Partial Sprinklers

Chairperson Al Adams introduced guest speaker Jeff Halpert to update the committee on the status of their proposal regarding partial sprinkler systems. Guest Jeff Halpert thanked the committee for their time and explained the history of the item first being introduced back in November 2021 and more formally on the agenda in December 2021, which received one comment from the committee. During January's committee meeting the item was back on the agenda, with no follow up questions or comments received from committee members. Guest Jeff Halpert proposed approval from the committee to incorporate in the California edition of NFPA 25 a summary clarifying that limited area sprinkler systems require an inspection. For simplicity a form was created for applicable items to limit ambiguity and promote consistency and clarity. Guest Jeff Halpert stated that Southern California FPO supports this effort and are hoping to gain the support of the committee as well. Guest speaker James Carver seconded Guest Jeff Halpert's presentation.

Chairperson Al Adams opened the floor to any questions from the committee members after having reviewed the attachment that was dispersed to all members prior to the meeting. Member Randy Dysart

posed the question regarding the AES 2.1.1 form on page 3 to add a line ensuring the valve is in the locked position. Member James Feld posed the question as to who is required to complete the form. It was confirmed that the building owner is responsible for completing the form, so Member James Feld proposed some further information be provided to building owners who may not choose to purchase the California edition of NFPA 25 due to the cost. Member Jason McBroom addressed this comment stating it would be more cost efficient for the building owner to purchase the NFPA 25 California edition than an annual inspection for a single fire sprinkler head over a dumpster.

Member Darrell Hefley moved to accept the proposal presented by guests Jeff Halpert and James Carver that the forms submitted and reviewed by the AES committee are acceptable, in addition to, a slight revision to the regulation; Member Randy Dysart seconded the motion. A roundtable vote was taken and the motion carried in favor of approval with two members in opposition at 10:19 A.M. PDT.

Guest James Carver asked what the next steps are now that it has been approved by the committee. Chairperson Al Adams stated that he will move forward with Chief Andersen's guidance. Guest James Carver thanked the committee for all their efforts on this project.

C. Regulations Development

i. Chapter 5.5

Chairperson Al Adams introduced Member Chip Lindley to discuss the workgroup progress for Chapter 5.5. Member Chip Lindley thanked the workgroup for all their efforts and participation. He stated that workgroup members worked together to provide reasoning for the proposed changes to the regulation. This was then submitted to Co-Chairperson Brice Bennett for review and wording changes consistent with OAL guidelines.

Member Chip Lindley asked about the ability of GOVmotus to upload CEUs after a license has already expired. Chairperson Al Adams clarified that it is possible to continue to upload CEUs and the license will remain on hold until all qualifications are met. Member Darrell Hefley confirmed that Kemiko Tolon was also able to answer this concern during the workgroup meeting as well.

Chairperson Al Adams stated that the next step will be for Co-Chairperson Brice Bennett to review the changes and an internal discussion will be had regarding Chapter 5.5.

Chairperson Al Adams also presented an issue that needs to be discussed by the committee concerning Chapter 5.5. The issue

deals with emergency sprinkler head replacement. The OSFM has been addressed by several fire departments concerning replacement of a single fire sprinkler head due to an accidental discharge, and their capability to return the system to service until a certified sprinkler fitter can verify the system. It has been suggested that a fitter must return the system to in-service within 24 hours.

Member Chip Lindley asked if this is something that will need to be added to Chapter 5.5. Chairperson Al Adams confirmed that Chapter 5.5 is the appropriate place for this addition to the regulation due to replacement of a sprinkler head being considered a repair, which currently by regulation can only be done by a certified sprinkler fitter.

Member Chip Lindley expressed concern with the fire department replacing sprinkler heads with spares due to the potential of incorrect heads being placed in the system and the building owner assuming that the issue is resolved without recertification. Chairperson Al Adams clarified that this scenario is why they would add a stipulation that a certified fitter must inspect and restore the system to in-service within 24 hours and provide documentation of recertification. He explained the concern by the fire department is safety, they do not want to leave the system inactive, and cannot wait on-scene for extended periods of time waiting for a company to recertify the system. Chairperson Al Adams stated the OSFM will review this issue internally and remain open to the committee about any developments.

Chairperson Al Adams opened the floor to any fire personnel participating to add any input on the topic. Member Bryan Jonson stated that there is currently nothing prohibiting fire personnel from replacing a sprinkler head, and the potential risk to safety and property from turning the valve off and having no fire protection is greater than having an incorrect sprinkler head placed temporarily.

Member Randy Dysart stated that this issue does not only concern replacing a sprinkler head, but there could be further damage to piping that needs to be inspected prior to recharging the system, or it could result in further damage to property. He emphasized the importance of follow up from a certified company to inspect the system.

Guest Shannon Sanders also asked that the OSFM to please consider the liability concerns of having fire departments replace

sprinkler heads in case further water damage is inflicted on the property.

Member Peter Hulin also stated that in an emergency situation the fire department should be allowed to temporarily rectify the situation with the stipulation that the building owner is responsible for following up with a certified company within a realistic and timely manner.

Member Jason McBroom confirmed that fire personnel are trained on fire protection systems and restoring those systems so that operations may resume. Member Bryan Jonson stated that the language already exists for next day evaluation and that as long as they are acting in the best interest of life and property there should be no issue of liability for fire personnel.

Member Chip Lindley reiterated that the importance of this regulation lies in the requirement to have a company follow up and recertify the operation of the system. Member Wayne Weisz seconded that the time frame is critical.

Chairperson Al Adams thanked everyone for their input, and further discussion will be had internally and presented to the committee.

ii. Chapter 5

Kemiko Tolon stated that workgroups will be developed to work on Chapter 5 regulations. Member James Feld stated that there should be already established workgroups in place from a prior meeting. Member Darrell Hefley seconded. Kemiko Tolon clarified that there are workgroups, however, there is no information to present from those workgroups for today's meeting. Chairperson Al Adams stated that Co-Chairperson Brice Bennett will follow up with the committee regarding these workgroups. Member James Feld recommended that each group submit their recent work so that this may be dispersed to the committee for upcoming meetings.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Sprinkler Head Replacement

Chairperson Al Adams thanked everyone for their contributions to the discussion on this topic as it was addressed with Chapter 5.5.

IV. OPEN FORUM

Chairperson Al Adams opened the discussion to committee members. Member Peter Hulin asked for clarification on regulation requiring that someone be employed in order to obtain a sprinkler fitter license. Chairperson Al Adams confirmed you must be working for a certified company. Member Peter Hulin

then presented the scenario if someone is laid off or unemployed leaving them unlicensed, that a new employer as a result could not hire them due to not having a license. Chairperson Al Adams clarified that if a person is laid off or unemployed, their license will only go to an invalid state, returning to a valid state once they regain employment. Member Peter Hulin also presented a case where a letter was requested to verify the hours of training for an apprentice to advance to a journeyman. Chairperson Al Adams is unsure where that requirement comes from as it does not come from the OSFM.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairperson Al Adams opened the floor to the public. Guest Amber Barrios stated they have been holding all new sprinkler fitter applications until July so they can utilize the full year before renewal and asked if this is best practice. Kemiko Tolon stated that it is in law that a license is valid from the date of issuance until June 30th, so she recommends if they want the full year that the solution is to wait until July 1st to submit.

Guest Kim Stocking presented a question regarding renewals. She has several cases with sprinkler fitters that were out of the industry for various reasons for several years who are now facing back pay and late fees to renew their license with their completed CEUs. She asked that the OSFM review internally a solution for cases such as these. Chairperson Al Adams stated that they will review these types of scenarios, and to consider that current regulations says that if a license expires that they would need to reapply as a new applicant. The current review of the regulations is to allow licensees to renew their license with associated fees in order to not have them reapply as a new applicant.

Guest Vahe Zohrabian also presented a concern with fees associated with inactivating and renewing a license while not currently working in the profession. He also expressed concern as an employer about being responsible for verifying work for new employees. Guest Vahe Zohrabian also asked since this is the first year requiring CEUs that the OSFM consider waiving late fees to assist members of the industry as they are learning the new process.

Guest John Holmes asked a clarification question for holding an application until July so that they get a full year and if that is allowed. Kemiko Tolon stated an application can be submitted at any time and it is up to the company and applicant to determine when they submit.

Member Randy Dysart expressed concern about creating short time constrictions on sprinkler fitters in regulation as change will be occurring in the economy and issues may arise that will result in the loss of fitters.

Member James Feld returned to the issue of sprinkler fitters presented by Guest Kim Stocking, and reminded the group that there is the option of applying as a new applicant with documentation of the hours of experience. He stated if they

have not been working in the field for several years this may be an appropriate option. If they choose to do so they will not face any of the late fees and will be up to date on changes in the industry. Guest Kim Stocking expressed concern about this process giving the fitter a new license number and causing confusion and inflation in the number of statewide fitters for program staff. Chairperson Al Adams stated that this is an issue that effects all programs, but what is unique about the AES program is that many fitters came in on historical recognition.

Member Chip Lindley stated that requirements to maintain a license are not unique to sprinkler fitters, and that it is the responsibility of the fitter to renew their license no matter what the circumstance is. He stated that unique scenarios such as were presented are the exception not the rule. Member Darrell Hefley stated that there are regulations in place for fitters who have proof of a previous license that all that is needed to obtain a new license is a test. Guest Rigoberto Vasquez stated that the industry does not change enough in several years to require someone to completely start the licensing process over, however, concurs that it is the fitter's responsibility to maintain their license as it is their livelihood. Member James Feld addressed this comment by stating that between NFPA and regulations there are many changes that occur. Guest Steve Schwartz stated that CEU requirements are not unique to this industry, and that many licenses across various industries require this. He reiterated that it is the responsibility of the licensee to maintain their license.

VI. SCHEDULE FOR FUTURE MEETING

The next Committee Meeting is scheduled for July 27, 2022.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Al Adams asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting and thanked everyone for their participation.

It was moved by Member Darrell Hefley to adjourn the meeting, motion seconded by Member James Feld. Chairperson Al Adams adjourned the meeting at 11:25 A.M. PDT.