



OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL Fire Alarm Advisory Committee

May 8, 2019 Meeting Minutes
2251 Harvard Street, 4th Floor Sacramento, CA 95815
10 a.m. – 2 p.m. (Pacific Daylight Time)

COMMITTEE GOAL

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

OSFM STAFF

David Castillo, Chairperson, OSFM
Daniel Berlant, OSFM
Kevin Chan, OSFM
Greg Andersen, OSFM
Ben Ho, OSFM
Dan Scott, OSFM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Sagiv Weiss-Ishai, San Francisco Fire Department
Rick Cortina, Apple Valley Communications
Richard Roberts, National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA)
Nanci Timmins, Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development
Rick Lewis, Sabah International
Shane Clary, Bay Alarm Company
John Guhl, NoFireOne

MEMBERS ATTENDING VIA TELECONFERENCE

Jay Levy, California Automatic Fire Alarm Association (CAFAA)
John McMahon, Underwriters Laboratories (UL)
Wendy Gifford, Nest Laboratories
David Meyers, Riverside County Fire Department

MEMBERS ABSENT

Andrew Thul, SLS Fire Inc.

GUESTS

Sonja Zozula, LightSaver Technologies

Sequoia Zozula, LightSaver Technologies

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson David Castillo at 10:06 a.m. (Pacific Daylight Time).

II. ROLL CALL and INTRODUCTIONS

Roll call was taken by Dan Scott. Chairperson David Castillo determined that a quorum of Committee members was present.

Chief Daniel Berlant informed the Committee that the 2019-2020 May Revision to the Governor's Budget proposed an increase in the budget for the Building Materials Listing Program to remedy the staffing shortage. He also said that the fee schedule for the program was going to be updated as it had not been changed since the 1980s and was not adequate to support the staff necessary for the program to operate with the expected efficiency.

All individuals present and on the telephone introduced themselves.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. Visual Notification in private/common offices and in undefined rooms

Sagiv Weiss-Ishai said that the 2016 edition of the California Fire Code (CFC), Section 907 addresses visual alarms such as strobe lights and includes lists in Section 907.5 of the public use areas and common use areas where visual alarms are required. There is a difference of interpretations among Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) regarding shared offices, common use offices and other undefined rooms. After the Committee discussed different possible scenarios and real-world examples, Richard Roberts made a motion that a workgroup be formed to make a recommendation to the Committee to clarify visual alarms requirements, Rick Cortina seconded the motion. Sagiv Weiss-Ishai volunteered to head a workgroup. The Committee unanimously voted to approve the motion.

B. Visual notification for the Hearing Impaired in R-2.1 occupancies

Sagiv Weiss-Ishai continued the previous discussion of 2016 edition of the CFC, Section 907.5.2.3.2 and asked about power sources, back-up batteries and standalone notification devices. Wendy Gifford noted that UL is discussing a new requirement that the backup battery be the same for all auxiliary devices, so this issue could soon become a moot point. Rick Lewis agreed that this has been an issue of contention as that there is a possible discrepancy between the 2016 edition of National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 72, Chapter 29, which states that the strobe lights being discussed do not require battery back-up, and the 2016 edition of the CFC, Section 907.2.11.6, which is unclear if it is talking about smoke alarms or strobe lights. Jay Levy commented that he is seeing exceptions being made to smoke alarm and smoke detector rules which are not in the best interest of the public. Greg Anderson said that he would investigate this issue and issue a code interpretation, if necessary.

C. Update on OSFM task-group on Elevators

Sagiv Weiss-Ishai reports that two weeks before the meeting, the OSFM task-group on elevators convened. They discussed the issues previously identified in the 2016 edition of the California Building Code (CBC), Chapter 30, regarding smoke detectors in hoist ways and will make recommendations to revise the code for the intervening code cycle in July 2021. Chairperson David Castillo asked to be added to the task-group, Sagiv Weiss-Ishai noted that invitations for more people to join were sent out and anyone who is interested could participate.

D. Licensing and Inspection Requirements

Jay Levy said that licensing requirements for testing and inspection of fire alarm systems has been brought up in the past. Chairperson David Castillo stated that this was not the responsibility of the OSFM or this Committee and that this would likely be addressed by the Contractors State License Board. Shane Clary suggested that if CAFAA wanted to further pursue adding these requirements to law, that this would need to be accomplished through the legislative process as there is no current law directing the OSFM to regulate this. Chairperson David Castillo also suggested that this could be addressed at the national code level through NFPA. Ben Ho confirmed that this issue has been brought up in past years and that OSFM could not consider the issue as it would require a legislative process.

E. Restriction of the Inspection of Waterflow Devices

Shane Clary asked about the curtailing of water pump testing due to the drought. Chairperson David Castillo stated that this issue would be addressed by the Automatic Extinguishing Systems Advisory Committee.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Emergency Responder Radio Coverage (ERRC) Systems

Richard Roberts said in the 2021 edition of the International Fire Code (IFC), there will be a requirement that ERRC Systems meet the new UL Standard 2524, which was first published in October 2018. He asked if California should adopt this in the 2019 Intervening Code Adoption Cycle or wait for 2021 cycle. Sagiv Weiss-Ishai says that adopting it too soon would be unfair to industry as some companies are still developing or submitting products to comply with the Standard, which other Committee members agreed with.

B. High-Frequency Sounder Base

Sagiv Weiss-Ishai asked if only a smoke alarm is required in an R-1 or R-2 occupancy, is an optional system smoke detector with a sounder base are required to have a low frequency sounder base. Richard Roberts and Rick Cortina think that it is required if it is connected to a fire alarm system, then it falls under the scope of NFPA 72 Chapter 18. The Committee has conflicting opinions on the matter. Shane Clary recommends that the workgroup established earlier to address visual notification consider this

issue as well. John Guhl made a motion that the workgroup be expanded to consider high frequency and low-frequency notifications in this situation, Richard Roberts seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

C. EVACS in a Low-rise R-2 Occupancy

Sagiv Weiss-Ishai asked if voluntarily installed Emergency Voice and Alarm Communications Systems (EVACS) in a low-rise R-2 building, are pre-recorded messages required or is a temporal-3 low frequency tone sufficient. He states that the code which addresses this is in the 2016 edition of the CFC Section 907.5.2.2 and 907.5.2.2.1. The Committee discussed if a voluntarily installed system must meet the requirements for buildings where the same system is required and questioned if the previously mentioned codes even apply as these might not be fully functioning EVACS as used. John Guhl suggested that the 2016 edition of NFPA 72 Section 23.10.3 applies.

D. Transmission of Off-site Fire Alarm Signals

Rick Cortina states that some AHJ are requiring more than one transmission source for fire alarms to the approved supervising station, but others allow the IPDACT to be used as a sole source. The code in question is the 2016 edition of NFPA 72 Section 26. The Committee discussed the universal effectiveness of such devices due to human error and due to a lack of requirements for back-up power.

E. Location Transmission by ECS

Sagiv Weiss-Ishai asked if a two-way Emergency Communication System (ECS) call boxes are required to transmit an exact location within a building (1) to the control unit and/or (2) to the supervising station. Rick Lewis notes that the 2016 Edition of the CBC, Section 1009.8.1, says that this is not required if the building is constantly monitored. The 2019 Edition of NPFA 72 will say that the location must be provided, but location is not specifically defined. The Committee recommended that Sagiv Weiss-Ishai write a request for a formal code interpretation.

V. OPEN FORUM

- A. Chairperson David Castillo introduced Sonja Zozula of LightSaver Technologies. He asked her to present to the Committee on the LinearStrobe Egress Marking Visible Notification Appliance her company developed.

Sonja Zozula demonstrated the LinearStrobe, which alerts individuals to fire with a strobe light and illuminates a path to exit a building. There is both a battery-operated model designer for homes and small offices and a commercial model which is hard-wire connected to a fire alarm system's notification appliance circuitry.

- B. Nanci Timmins asked if the Committee should look into Power over Ethernet (POE) systems. Richard Roberts said that there is an NFPA

workgroup which is addressing this and will be publishing findings soon and offered to connect her to this workgroup.

- C. Jay Levy asked about the activation of manual alarms during testing as described in the annex of 2016 edition of NFPA 72 Section 23.8.5.1.2. Shane Clary said this was a highly divisive topic when it was written and the issue goes back to the 1960s. He would continue to monitor this topic.

VI. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be September 12, 2019 at the Office of the State Fire Marshal, Pipeline Safety Division 3780 Kilroy Airport Way #500, Long Beach, California 90806 at 10 a.m. (Pacific Daylight Time).

Action Items:

- Sagiv Weiss-Ishai will form a workgroup to address notification as decided in Items III-A and IV-B of these meeting minutes.
- Sagiv Weiss-Ishai will draft a code interpretation question as described in Item IV-E.
- Greg Andersen will review hearing impaired devices in R-2.1 occupancies as discussed in Item III-B.
- Dan Scott will look into the drought restrictions on the inspection of waterflow devices.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson David Castillo adjourned the meeting at 2:11 p.m. (Pacific Daylight Time).