

THE FIRE LINE

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What is NFPA?

Whether you are relatively new to fire claims, either from the adjustment, management, or product perspective, or you have been around for a long time, invariably you have probably heard people discussing "NFPA". Regardless of your particular involvement in the fire claims industry, you will eventually come across information, references, discussions, etc. pertaining to certain aspects of what is known as NFPA. So . . . For



purposes of familiarizing or refreshing the memory of those that have come across language that includes references to NFPA, this will give you a quick synopsis of what the NFPA is . . . and why it is so important in our everyday lives.

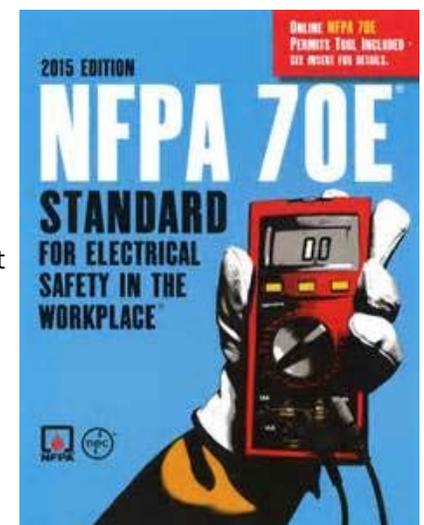
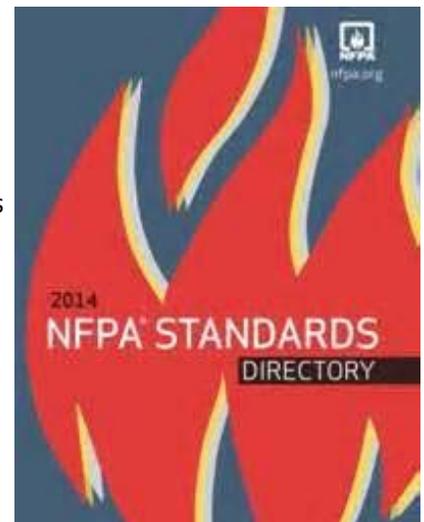
First, let's define what NFPA is and why it is important not only to our lives, but the field of fire investigations. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) [you can't believe the names that people call this organization in trials, depositions, discovery documents, etc.] was founded in 1896 for purposes of promoting the science and improve the methodology of fire protection and fire prevention. The Association obtains and circulates information on fire-related subject matter and secures the cooperation of its members in establishing proper safeguards against loss of life and property.

Through the various NFPA committees that are formulated to address fire-related issues that face our nation, they develop and publish "information" on a

variety of subject matter in the form of codes, standards, recommended practices and guides. These documents are developed through a consensus standards development process approved by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). In order to understand what each of the four types of documents are, the following are definitions as provided by NFPA:

Standard: A document, the main text of which contains only mandatory reference by another standard or code or for adoption into law. Non-mandatory provisions shall be located in an appendix or annex, footnote, or fine-print note and are not to be considered a part of the requirements of a standard.

Code: A standard that is an extensive compilation of provisions covering broad subject matter or that is suitable for adoption into law independently of other codes and standards.



Recommended Practices:

A document that is similar in content and structure to a code or standard but that contains only non-mandatory provisions using the word "should" to indicate recommendations in the body of the text.



NFPA 241—Standard for Safeguarding Construction, Alteration & Demotion Operations

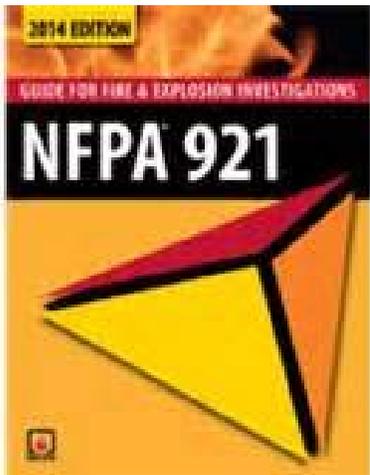
NFPA 211—Standard for Chimneys, Fireplaces, Vents & Solid Fuel-Burning Appliances

NFPA 921—Guide for Fire & Explosion Investigations

NFPA 1033—Fire Investigator Professional Qualifications

All of these documents and many more impact the manner in which our home, business, church, grocery store, restaurant, etc. are constructed, maintained and occupied. They also produce documents pertaining to the operation of our fire departments and the personnel within each department, i.e., fire officer, fire inspector, fire investigator,

Guide: A document that is advisory or informative in nature and that contains only non-mandatory provisions. A guide may contain mandatory statements such as when a guide can be used, but the document as a whole is not suitable for adoption into law.



NFPA documents affect or impact our lives each and every day. Where we live, work, play, dine, wor-

ship, attend public gatherings, etc. ... All of these locations and many more were effected by NFPA documents. You ask "how"? The following are a few examples of how these documents affect our daily lives:

NFPA—National Electric Code

NFPA 101—Life Safety Codes

NFPA 13—Installation of Sprinkler Systems

NFPA 54—Fuel Gas Code

NFPA 58—Storage & Handling of LP-Gas

NFPA 30—Flammable & Combustible Liquids Code

NFPA 51B—Standard for Fire Prevention During Weld-

If you have been involved with fire claims for longer than a week, my guess is that you have heard about NFPA 921—Guide for Fire & Explosion Investigations. This "guide" has influenced the manner in which we have conducted fire investigations since the first edition of the document was initially published in 1992. Since that time, there have been six editions of this document that have been produced by the Technical Committee on Fire Investigations. (I will devote an entire article in "Fire Line" to this document in the coming months.) The majority of the documents and their respective committees that are appointed to write/rewrite/review all documents generally perform this activity on a three (3) year cycle. The written documents are then submitted for public review and then voted upon at NFPA meetings. Thus These documents become consensus documents that comprise our codes, standards, recommended practice and guides, the majority of which are adopted and utilized by every state in this nation.

So as you can see, NFPA documents affect our lives each and every day. Hopefully, this article in FireLine gives you a better understanding of what the NFPA is all about.