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D. L. DAWSON Executive Director

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To Whom It May Concern:

RE: NFPA 25 Fire Sprinkler Inspections

The State Board of Examiners of Plumbing, Heating and Fire Sprinkler Contractors has been made aware that some firms engaged in the business of fire sprinkler inspection contracting are not performing their annual fire sprinkler inspections in compliance with the requirements prescribed by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) as incorporated into the North Carolina State Building Code.

The primary issue of concern is the failure of inspection contractors/technicians to properly conduct inspections in accordance with the requirements of NFPA 25, particularly in residential occupancies such as apartments, condominiums, hotels, and similar occupancies.

Fire Sprinkler Inspection Contractors, Fire Sprinkler Inspection Technicians, and owners of firms engaged in contracting and/or performing such inspections should understand that this is a matter of life safety. Failure to properly conduct inspections in accordance with the requirements of NFPA 25, the North Carolina State Building Code, and the rules of the State Board of Examiners of Plumbing, Heating and Fire Sprinkler Contractors will result in disciplinary actions by the Board. In addition, doing so may also expose those responsible to civil litigation and possible criminal prosecution if failure to properly conduct inspections is found to be a contributing factor after a fire results in property damage, personal injury, or death.

The 2014 edition of NFPA 25 provides the following requirements and guidance.

Chapter 4 sets forth the following applicable section:

Section 4.1.3 states: *“The property owner or designated representative shall provide ready accessibility to components of water-based fire protection systems that require inspection, testing, and maintenance “*

Chapter 5 sets forth the following sections that are applicable:

Section 5.1.1.1 states: "This chapter shall provide the minimum requirements for the routine inspection, testing, and maintenance of sprinkler systems."

Section 5.2.1.1 states: "Sprinklers shall be inspected from the floor annually."

Section 5.2.1.1.2 states: "Any sprinkler that shows signs of any of the following shall be replaced:

- 1) Leakage*
- 2) Corrosion*
- 3) Physical damage*
- 4) Loss of fluid in the glass bulb heat-responsive element*
- 5) Loading*
- 6) Painting unless painted by the sprinkler manufacturer*

Section 5.2.1.1.3 states: "Any sprinkler that has been installed in the incorrect orientation shall be corrected by repositioning the branch line, drop or sprig, or shall be replaced."

Section 5.2.1.1.4 states: "Sprinklers installed in concealed spaces such as above suspended ceilings shall not require inspection"

Section 5.2.1.1.5 states: "Sprinklers installed in areas that are inaccessible for safety considerations due to process operation shall be inspected during each scheduled shutdown."

Taken together, the above sections speak to the requirement to perform visual inspections from the floor of ALL sprinkler heads, unless the exceptions for concealed spaces or inaccessibility for safety considerations are applicable. Licensees should understand in the event of a complaint to the board they will be held to compliance to the standard set out in NFPA 25.

It should be noted that additional inspections may be appropriate, this document is only intended to address the annual inspection per NFPA 25.

Sincerely,



Dale L. Dawson
Executive Director

cc: AFSA North Carolina Chapter