

# OFFICE OF INSURANCE AND SAFETY FIRE COMMISSIONER

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: All Licensed Sprinkler Contractors

FROM: M. Dwayne Garriss  
Assistant State Fire Marshal  
Engineering/Inspections Division

DATE: December 2, 2005

SUBJECT: Facility Inspection Requirements

Under the provisions of §25-11-11(c) of Title 25, Chapter 11 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, inspections of water based fire protection systems are required to be conducted by a licensed inspector or a Certificate of Competency holder at a minimum on an annual basis. In addition, effective September 10, 2003, the Safety Fire Commissioner adopted new rules and regulations which included the adoption of the 2002 edition of NFPA 25, *Standard for the Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems* under paragraph (18) of Rule 120-3-3-.04. This particular standard also requires at a minimum, annual inspections of water based fire protection systems.

Under section 5.1 entitled, "General," this standard states that Chapter 5 of the standard shall provide the minimum requirements for the routine inspection, testing, and maintenance of sprinkler systems and that Table 5.1 is to be used to determine the minimum required frequencies for inspection, testing, and maintenance. Furthermore, subsection 3.3.20 defines "Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance Service" as a service program provided by a qualified contractor or qualified owner's representative in which all components unique to the property's systems are inspected and tested at the required times and necessary maintenance is provided. This program includes logging and retention of relevant records.(Emphasis added)

In order to comply with Chapter 11 of O.C.G.A. Title 25, the Rules and Regulations of the Safety Fire Commissioner and the codes and standards adopted, the entire system and its components described in Chapters 5 through 12 are to be at least visually inspected unless otherwise prescribed in any of the above. Therefore, it is unacceptable to do a sampling by visual validation of different areas or portions of a system such as a percentage of apartments or rooms in a residential facility or business occupancy and then consider the system

to be fully inspected. A water based fire protection system shall only be tagged with either a green or yellow tag in accordance with Chapter 4 of NFPA 25 by a Georgia licensed fire sprinkler inspector, a Certificate of Competency holder or an authorized representative of a licensed fire sprinkler contractor when the entire system and its components has been fully inspected per the requirements described in Chapters 5 through 12.

Remember, a new inspection tag shall be attached to the water based fire protection system each time an inspection and test service is performed. In other words, after each inspection, and testing of the water based fire protection system, an inspection tag is required to be completed indicating all work that has been done, and then attached to the system in such a position as to permit convenient inspection and not hamper its activation or operation. An inspection tag shall only be removed by an authorized representative of a licensed fire sprinkler contractor. That would be the licensed contractor's Certificate of Competency holder or the licensed sprinkler inspector for the company. A green water based fire protection system compliance inspection tag shall not be installed on the water based fire protection system until any impairment or items of noncompliance have been corrected and the system has been re-inspected and found to be in a state of operational readiness. The green inspection tag indicates that the water based fire protection system is in full compliance with the appropriate NFPA standard being 25 if an existing system or 13, 13R or 13D if the inspection is for a new or modified system.

A yellow water based fire protection system noncompliance inspection tag shall be installed on the water based fire protection system if there are any items of noncompliance that have not been corrected but the system is still found to be in a state of operational readiness. The signature of the licensee shall be placed on the noncompliance inspection tag that certifies the impairments listed on the label cause the system to be out of compliance with the appropriate NFPA standard. In addition, a letter of noncompliance conditions shall be sent to the building owner or authorized representative within five working days of the date of inspection. A noncompliance inspection tag shall only be removed by an authorized representative of a licensed fire sprinkler contractor upon re-inspection of the fire sprinkler system.

A red water based fire protection system impairment tag shall be installed on the water based fire protection system if the system is impaired for any reason and is non-operational. The signature of the licensee shall be placed on an impairment tag to certify that the impairments listed on the label cause the system to be out of service and out of compliance with NFPA standards. In addition, a letter of emergency impairment conditions shall be sent to the building owner or authorized representative and to the occupant within 24 hours of the time of inspection. The building owner and/or occupant shall notify the authority having jurisdiction with 24 hours of the time of the impairment notification. An impairment tag shall only be removed by an authorized representative of a licensed fire sprinkler contractor upon re-inspection and recertification of the fire sprinkler system.

Please notify your clients that all records of inspections, tests, and maintenance of the building's water based fire protection system and its components are required to be maintained on site for review by the authority having jurisdiction for a minimum of a three year period. In addition, when a water-based fire protection system is tagged with a yellow non-compliant or red impaired tag, please be sure to notify the owner and/or occupant that it is their responsibility to send a copy of the inspection report to the authority having jurisdiction. Failure to do so will place the owner and/or occupant in non-compliance of the State's minimum fire safety standards that could ultimately result in the civil penalties specified in §25-2-37(d) being imposed upon them. This Code Section specifically states, "Any person who violates this chapter or any rule, regulation, or order issued by the Commissioner under this chapter shall be subject to a civil penalty not to exceed \$1,000.00 for each day that the violation persists..."

Although in previous memorandums written it was stated that the notification of the authority having jurisdiction not a requirement but was highly recommended that the licensed inspector notify the authority having jurisdiction in writing of all noncompliance items and/or impairments found. In further research of the current regulations, please be advised that it **IS a requirement and NOT a recommendation** that the licensed inspector or authorized representative of the licensed fire sprinkler contractor notify the authority having jurisdiction in writing of all noncompliance items and/or impairments found. Any information on the building location, address, telephone number, and owner and/or occupant would be helpful for the authority having jurisdiction to follow-up on. Please be advised, after each printing of any tag, red, green or yellow, a minimum of three sample tags must be forwarded to the State Fire Marshal's office for their record from each company. Thank you for your assistance in getting this information out to your clients and helping to ensure that they are in compliance with the State's minimum fire safety standards. If you have any questions, please contact us at (404) 656-7089.