

# ASSOCIATION OPERATIONS - Overview

The NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) was established in 1896. The Association is an independent, voluntary-membership, nonprofit (tax-exempt) organization. Incorporated in 1930 under laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, NFPA's mission is to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by providing and advocating scientifically-based consensus codes and standards, research, training, and education. NFPA's international headquarters is located in Quincy, MA, USA. A board of directors has general charge of the affairs of the Association.

## THE OPERATIONS GROUP

NFPA activities generally fall into two broad, interrelated areas — technical and educational. The Association's technical activities include research and code and standard development, while its educational efforts seek to reach people of all ages from all regions with instruction in safety from fire and certain other hazards.

### Codes and Standards

A major focus of the Association is the development, publication, and dissemination of timely consensus codes and standards. Adoption, use and enforcement of these documents serve to minimize the possibility and effects of fire and other hazards in all aspects of contemporary activity. NFPA codes and standards are developed by about 250 committees, each of which represents a balance of affected interests. More than 6,800 people serve on these committees on an unpaid basis. The NFPA Standards Council administers the committees and their work on nearly 300 documents addressing topics of importance to the built environment.

The consensus process by which NFPA codes and standards are developed is based on the premise that safety is every person's business. Numerous opportunities exist throughout this process to allow both proponents and opponents of all technical subjects to be freely and fairly heard. Once the documents complete the development process and are issued, they are published and made available as model documents for voluntary use.

All NFPA consensus codes and standards are developed under the procedures of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). ANSI criteria assure procedural fairness, openness, due process, and input and decision making from all affected parties. NFPA's consensus documents fall under four broad categories:

### Building Construction and Life Safety

The Building Construction and Life Safety Division is responsible for the development of *NFPA 5000*<sup>®</sup>, *Building Construction and Safety Code*<sup>®</sup> and *NFPA 101*<sup>®</sup>, *Life Safety Code*<sup>®</sup> and the fire test standards that support these two major codes.

### Electrical Engineering

The Electrical Engineering Division is responsible for the areas of electrical and fire alarm systems and equipment. An advisory committee provides guidance for NFPA activity on the adoption and use of the *National Electrical Code*<sup>®</sup> and related documents. In partnership with the International Association of Electrical Inspectors, the staff participates in managing a certification program for electrical inspectors.

### Fire Protection Applications & Chemical Engineering

The Fire Protection Applications & Chemical Engineering Division is responsible for the areas of fire protection systems and equipment, special hazards and occupancies, and chemical and hazardous material storage and handling. Three advisory committees provide guidance for NFPA activity in the areas of flammable liquids, gases, and

marine field service. Through the Marine Chemist Qualification Board, the Association administers the NFPA Certificated Marine Chemist Program.

### Public Fire Protection

The Public Fire Protection Division is responsible for more than 80 NFPA fire and emergency service codes and standards. Division personnel also assist in the administration of the Fire Inspector, Fire Protection Specialist, and Plan Reviewer Certification Programs and the Regional Fire Code Development Committees. Division personnel support NFPA investigation of fire and emergency incidents, provide liaison between NFPA and other fire service organizations, and present lectures at seminars throughout North America and other areas of the world.

### Fire Analysis and Research

NFPA's Fire Analysis and Research Division provides statistics and incident information on specific topics and maintains one of the world's most extensive fire experience databases. NFPA's annual survey of fire departments and its Fire Incident Data Organization (FIDO) file on large and major fires are used along with special studies and other major databases, most notably the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS).

The Division produces dozens of annual reports and special studies on varied aspects of the nation's fire problem and provides analysis and data services for individuals, government agencies, and private sector organizations. Access to the statistical information is through the division's One-Stop Data Shop. Some reports are available on NFPA's Web site.

### Fire Investigations

NFPA conducts investigations of incidents of technical interest to the Association and its constituents, conveying important lessons from the incidents to NFPA technical committees and technical programs, as well as to the broader fire community. NFPA fire investigators regularly coordinate their activities with state and provincial fire marshals, metropolitan fire chiefs, building code groups, and federal agencies, working in the US and internationally. The reports are distributed by NFPA and summaries are also available through NFPA's Web site.

### International Operations

NFPA has established offices in Canada, Mexico, Europe, and Hong Kong. The Association undertakes the translation of key codes and standards and works in varied collaborative relationships with its counterparts around the world. NFPA's International Operations division publishes a bilingual Spanish/Portuguese magazine, *NFPA Journal*<sup>®</sup> *Latinoamericano*, and serves as the executive secretary of NFPA's Latin American membership section. NFPA has begun the creation of a Chapter system throughout Latin America that is being pioneered in Mexico, Argentina, Dominican Republic, Colombia, and Venezuela.

### Library: Charles S. Morgan Technical Library

The Charles S. Morgan Technical Library maintains one of the largest collections of information relevant to fire research today, holding vital data on the topics of fire prevention, fire safety, and fire service. The library's comprehensive collection includes more than 10,000 books and technical reports; 370 periodicals; films and videocassettes; and NFPA-published archives dating from the Association's founding in 1896. Code history documentation and research, as well

as copies of past NFPA codes, are provided by library staff for a fee. The NFPA library catalog can be accessed on NFPA's Web site.

### **Public Education**

The Public Education Division provides the technical foundation for NFPA's fire and life safety education messages and outreach strategies for the general public, fire departments, and other educators.

### **General Education**

NFPA's community-based educational programs, *Risk Watch*<sup>®</sup>: *Unintentional Injuries* and *Risk Watch*<sup>®</sup>: *Natural Disasters* are delivered through the Champion Management Team (CMT) program. This system utilizes multi-agency coalitions to support schools and classroom teachers who implement NFPA educational programs. The Division provides the technical support and training for CMTs as they expand NFPA programs throughout states and provinces.

Educational messages, based on NFPA codes and standards, are developed and incorporated in materials for consumer use. A committee of fire and burn experts convenes annually to discuss, modify, or recommend research for messages.

### **Center for High-Risk Outreach**

The Center was created to address the needs of people at the greatest risk from fires and burns: young children, older adults, and people in low-income communities. The Center looks for emerging issues that relate to factors that cause people to be at higher risk of fire death and injury and works to provide solutions through engineering, enforcement, and education. These activities include providing technical assistance and training to facilitate the delivery and continuity of NFPA programs designed for those at highest risk at the local, state, provincial, national, and international levels; identifying and educating specific individuals and agencies about populations at high risk; and working to obtain legislative and/or administrative support of NFPA initiatives that increase safety levels among those groups. The Center has developed two programs for high-risk populations: the *Learn Not to Burn*<sup>®</sup> Preschool Program, for young children ages three to five, and *Remembering When*<sup>™</sup>, a fire and fall injury prevention program for older adults.

### **Fire Prevention Week**

As the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week (FPW) for more than 80 years, NFPA selects the theme for the national commemoration and works to increase public awareness about the dangers of fire and how to prevent it. According to the National Archives and Records Administration's Library Information Center, Fire Prevention Week is the longest running public health and safety observance on record. To support local fire departments, FPW materials are distributed to every fire department in the United States and Canada. In addition, an enhanced version of these FPW materials is available through a dedicated Web site ([www.firepreventionweek.org](http://www.firepreventionweek.org)).

The history of FPW has its roots in the Great Chicago Fire, which occurred on October 9, 1871. This tragic conflagration killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 people homeless, and destroyed more than 17,000 structures. The Fire Marshals Association of North America [now the International Fire Marshals Association (IFMA)] sponsored the first National Fire Prevention Day on the 40th anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire. In 1920, President Woodrow Wilson issued the first National Fire Prevention Day proclamation. Every year since 1925, the President of the United States has signed a proclamation pronouncing the Sunday-through-Saturday period in which October 9 occurs a week of national observance.

### **Regional Operations**

NFPA has strategically located regional offices in the United States to work with members and other constituents locally on building, electrical, and fire safety issues and to assist jurisdictions in the adoption

of NFPA codes and standards. NFPA regional offices are located in Quincy, MA; Rehoboth Beach, DE; Louisville, KY; Tallahassee, FL; Denver, CO; Long Beach, CA; Dallas, TX; Toms River, NJ; and Sacramento, CA.

## **THE ADMINISTRATION GROUP**

### **Government Affairs**

The Association works with the United States Congress and federal agencies through its Washington, DC office to promote the adoption and use of NFPA codes and standards and to encourage a uniform national approach to combating fire and other hazards.

An active government affairs role is central to the Association's work, as NFPA codes and standards are widely used as a basis of legislation and regulation at all levels of government, from local to international. Examples of NFPA codes that have received worldwide recognition include the *Life Safety Code*<sup>®</sup>, the *National Electrical Code*<sup>®</sup>, and the *National Fuel Gas Code*. Many NFPA codes are referenced by federal government agencies, such as the regulations of the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). The documents are also used by insurance authorities for risk evaluation and premium rating and as references in designs and specifications.

### **Human Resources**

NFPA is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer offering its employees competitive salary and benefits packages. NFPA's work is carried out by a staff of 199 professional and 126 support personnel, located primarily in the Quincy, MA headquarters and in the Avon, MA distribution center. NFPA personnel work in support of NFPA's mission through varied programmatic activities.

### **Legal Services**

NFPA's Legal Department personnel serve as counsel to the NFPA Standards Council, which oversees the Association's codes and standards development activities, helping to ensure that due process and fairness are upheld throughout the creation or revision of all NFPA codes, standards, recommended practices, and guides. Additionally, this Department represents the association in organizational matters of law.

### **Meeting Services**

NFPA's conferences serve as educational and networking opportunities for Association members and others interested in benefiting from information on the latest fire, electrical, and building safety techniques and technologies. Several major conferences are hosted by NFPA annually:

The NFPA *World Safety Conference and Exposition*<sup>®</sup> draws an average attendance of 7,500 people each May or June. The conference includes educational sessions and one of the largest expositions of fire protection and safety products in North America. It also features a technical committee report session, offering members an opportunity to vote on NFPA code and standard actions, and offering the public the opportunity to voice their opinions on those actions.

NFPA's Fall Education Conference includes in-depth training sessions in key fire prevention and protection subject areas. The Fall Conference scheduled for November 2004 will be the last to be held in this manner, and will be followed in 2005 and thereafter with this meeting consolidated into the aforementioned NFPA *World Safety Conference and Exposition*<sup>®</sup> held during May or June.

The *NEC Forum*, based on NFPA's *National Electrical Code*<sup>®</sup>, is a unique field-specific conference, held regularly, and designed to increase knowledge of electrical code specifications, changes, and interpretations, while facilitating peer interaction and discussion of compliance issues.

The Americas Fire Expo is an educational event serving the fire safety industry in Latin America, the Caribbean Basin, and the Southeastern United States. Co-located with Americas Security Expo, the show draws thousands of attendees each year.

## Public Affairs

NFPA's corporate communications program is carried out by the Public Affairs Division. Through public awareness campaigns, news releases, feature articles, and media interviews, NFPA's spokespeople communicate the Association's mission, technical and educational activities, and life-saving messages to diverse audiences. NFPA is recognized by the electronic and print media as the leading authoritative source of technical information, research, prevention, and safety advice on fire and other hazards. The Division personnel regularly seek out international, national, and local media outlets to offer timely data, advice, and information as story possibilities.

## Research Foundation

The Fire Protection Research Foundation is the world's only charitable fire and building research institution. An independent nonprofit organization established in 1982, the Foundation is a catalyst for encouraging and conducting independent research on fire, electrical, and building risk. The Foundation collaborates with laboratories throughout the world, investigating new technologies, and documenting the performance of fire- and building-related products. The Foundation focuses on the state of the art and science in fire technical areas such as suppression, detection, toxicity, and transportation vehicles. Two Research Foundation symposia are offered each year, on the following topics: fire suppression and detection, and fire risk and hazard.

## THE BUSINESS GROUP

NFPA supports the accomplishment of its mission through varied business activities. These serve to fund the complex codes and standards development process, research, public education outreach, and public advocacy activities central to NFPA's mission.

## Certification Programs

NFPA presently offers eight recognized certification programs designed to document the minimum competency of and offer professional recognition to those individuals within the specified field of practice. Based on NFPA codes, standards, and technical publications, the programs include Certified Fire Protection Specialist, Certified Fire Inspector I and II, Certified Fire Plan Examiner, Certified Master Electrical Inspector, Certified Residential Electrical Inspector, Certified Building Inspector, and Certified Building Plans Examiner. A Certified Building Official examination is in development. Information for each of the programs is available at [www.nfpa.org/certification](http://www.nfpa.org/certification).

## Member Publications

The *NFPA Journal*<sup>®</sup>, NFPA's official membership magazine, covers major fire protection and suppression topics. A bimonthly publication also available online, the *Journal* carries special NFPA statistical studies on large-loss and multiple-death fires and fire fighter deaths and injuries; articles on advances in fire protection, public education, and codes and standards development; and Association information of interest to NFPA members.

The *NFPA Journal*<sup>®</sup> *Buyers' Guide* is produced in print and online, and provides the contact information necessary to obtain the products and services of the leading fire protection and fire service equipment manufacturers.

*NFPA Update*, e-mailed on request monthly, is an exclusive NFPA member benefit. *NFPA Update* covers safety-related news and contains "hotlinks" that provide instant access to additional information on NFPA's Web site.

## Membership

Approximately 75,000 individuals and 68 national trade and professional organizations comprise NFPA's voluntary membership. The majority of members reside in the United States; overall, members

represent 110 nations. In the most recent year, membership percentages by professional fields were as follows: architects, engineers, and contractors (17.3%); fire service (16.4%); industrial firms (15%); health care and educational facilities (8%); federal, state, and local governments (7.1%); electrical services (5.3%); offices, retail, lodging, and restaurants (3%); insurance (2.5%); utilities (1.5%); and other fields not classified above (23.1%).

There are 16 industry-specific sections within NFPA's membership, providing the opportunity for field concentration and exchange of ideas. The sections are: Architects, Engineers, and Building Officials; Aviation; Building Fire Safety Systems; Education; Electrical; International Fire Marshals Association (IFMA); Fire Science and Technology Educators; Fire Service; Health Care; Industrial Fire Protection; Latin American; Lodging Industry; Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Committee; Rail Transportation Systems; Research; and Wildland Fire Management.

## NFPA Web sites

NFPA Online: The Association's varied Web properties, led by NFPA Online ([www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)), serve NFPA members and the general public. Through its diverse Web capabilities, the Association provides original content to researchers, policy-makers, educators and trainers, the media, allied organizations, and other audiences. All users encounter fresh NFPA data, free access to key codes and standards, timely public advocacy positions and advice, and other useful information. Members also enjoy access to valuable member-only materials.

Educational Web sites: A Web site dedicated to NFPA's childhood injury prevention program, *Risk Watch*<sup>®</sup> ([www.riskwatch.org](http://www.riskwatch.org)), is useful for children, parents, teachers, community advocates, and others. As the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week, NFPA hosts a Web site dedicated to this national safety commemoration ([www.firepreventionweek.org](http://www.firepreventionweek.org)) that is the source of free educational materials for the fire service and general public. Another specialized NFPA Web site designed for children is [www.sparky.org](http://www.sparky.org), which features educational information from the Association's safety mascot, Sparky the Fire Dog<sup>®</sup>.

NFPA's Online Catalog: ([www.nfpacatalog.org](http://www.nfpacatalog.org)) provides a direct way for customers to purchase NFPA codes, standards, and companion products, professional development opportunities and membership on demand. Toll-free nationwide ordering of products is also available by calling 800-344-3555 from 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. eastern time.

## Professional Development

NFPA offers a wide variety of professional development opportunities addressing the latest fire and safety requirements and best practices. To help its customers stay current, NFPA presents seminars, videos, on-line learning, and special topic conferences.

NFPA seminars support the most widely used NFPA codes and standards and can be customized to meet the unique needs of the customer. NFPA also collaborates with other organizations and individuals to enhance the learner's experience with specific topics and expertise. Computer-based training can be accessed through the Professional Development section of NFPA's Web site. Five Certificate Programs are available that enable students to earn CEUs. Programs address topics of interest to firefighters and facilities complying with OSHA requirements, and related to the most widely used NFPA standards.

## Technical Publications

The Association's technical and general-interest publications cover the public safety spectrum. In addition to codes and standards, they include handbooks, technical/reference books, fire service publications, textbooks, pocket guides, and training manuals. Nearly 300 codes and standards are available as single copies. The single codes and standards are available in print form and in PDF form. The PDF

version of the codes and standards can be purchased and downloaded directly from the Internet at [www.nfpcatalog.org](http://www.nfpcatalog.org). The *National Fire Codes*<sup>®</sup> (NFC<sup>®</sup>), the complete set of all NFPA codes and standards, are also available as part of a 15-volume softbound set, or as part of a loose-leaf print or electronic subscription service. The electronic NFC subscription can be purchased on CD-ROM or as an online subscription on the Internet.

NFPA 5000<sup>®</sup>, *Building Construction and Safety Code*<sup>®</sup> was issued in 2002 and is the only building code that is developed under ANSI procedures. NFPA 5000 represents one of the 11 major codes that comprise the *Comprehensive Consensus Codes*<sup>®</sup> (C3) set. Other major NFPA documents include NFPA 101<sup>®</sup>, *Life Safety Code*<sup>®</sup>; and NFPA 70, *National Electrical Code*<sup>®</sup>. All of the C3 codes are developed under the ANSI process. One of the many strengths of the C3 code set is to also rely, to the extent practicable, on the use of ANSI documents from other organizations.

#### **Video Programs**

The Association is a major distributor of video programs designed to serve the training and information needs of the fire service, business, industry, education, and health care. NFPA films consistently receive top honors at film festivals throughout the country. Research, development and production of original, persuasive, and memorable educational videos are continual at NFPA. NFPA videos are available on a broad range of topics, suitable for public education, workplace safety and hazard awareness, fire and other emergency response personnel, and field-specific industry training. NFPA's newest productions include *Emergency Evacuation: What Every Employee Should Know*; *Inspection and Testing of Automatic Sprinkler Systems*; and *Inspection and Testing of Fire Alarm Systems*.

---