



National Independent Fire Alarm Distributors Association

Spring 2015

Calendar of Events

NIFAD

Annual Meeting

June 24-25, 2015

Chicago, IL

NFPA Convention

June 22-25, 2015

Chicago, IL

ISC West

April 15-17, 2015

Las Vegas, NV

AFFA National Codes Conference

April 21-24, 2015

San Antonio, TX

From the President's Desk

As we prepare for spring and leave one of the coldest winters for some of us to the history books, I think we need to look at the positives and keep the momentum building. We were all able to realize some financial relief with reduced gas prices at the pump for a few months. The economy continues to maintain stability and even improve in some areas. Unemployment continues to decrease, and I know we, as a company, are in a growth mode expanding and hiring new positions and aiding that cause. All good indicators as we move forward in 2015.



I also look at the positives as we continue to grow the NIFAD group, and some of the accomplishments we have realized over the past few years. We have seen membership increase in both supplier members as well as distributor members. This improves our ability to share more ideas with each other and enables us to consider multiple solutions when asking for help when things aren't working.

We have reviewed and evaluated our expenses as a group, and took action to identify trends, such as where we hold our annual meeting, how it directly affects cost, and how we can control those trends better. Being a non-profit, we must be cognizant of our expenses, so we can continue to grow as an organization and ensure the future of the association. My sincere thanks to our treasurer Anna, who has done an exceptional job monitoring and presenting the financials to the group. With her insight and reporting, it has maintained the group's focus and ability to control the budget.

I also thank the effort and hard work by all to create a meaningful and beneficial annual meeting, so all can learn and become more efficient. The annual meeting just continues to improve year after year. Mike Nelson who heads the program committee for the meeting, gave us one of the best of topic lists. It addressed specific industry issues and helped all become more aware of current events and how position yourself to deal with them. Examples are topics like POTS lines and IP communicators and what the future holds for them and how to address it. I'd like to thank Mike as well, for all he does to make it happen, and am looking forward to what the upcoming meeting in June, will have to offer. All of these items are extremely important to support NIFAD's growth, and success in the market.

As my term as President comes to a close, I look for those interested and enthused to help make NIFAD better. I believe we have the individuals involved who want to make the difference, ones that truly care, and want to make us better. We will be holding elections to join that effort at this year's annual meeting. We are looking for anyone who would like to help with our cause and make a difference. Please send your suggestion or nominations if you are interested in joining the board of directors to Bev, and she will be sure to include them on this year's ballot. Let's keep the momentum going, and build this into the best support networks of fire professionals' available. Thank you all for giving me the opportunity to help.

Ten Tips to Hiring and Keeping Top Employees

All of a company's employees add value and contribute to its success—some in small ways, others in a large measure. Because sound recruitment and retention strategies provide a competitive edge, hiring should be done carefully, methodically and strategically. Here are the ten ways to attract top prospects to your company and retain them once they're on board.

1. **Recruit Continuously:** Aggressive companies are always on the prowl for talent. They have a sense of what skills they need now and in the future, and what type of person will be a good fit. They look even when there are no current openings, because one can never predict when an employee might leave.
2. **Know What You Need:** Know the skills and personality traits that will make a person successful in a given job, so you can develop job descriptions when you're hiring. This helps in framing interviews with potential applicants, who in turn learn in advance more about the skills needed for the position.



Initially, a job description facilitates the selection of the right employee. But a good job description also ensures that he or she has a clear understanding of responsibility, authority and expected results, so it also becomes a useful training outline.

3. **Interview Many Candidates:** Don't hire the first person you like. Commit to meeting a number of people—even though you won't be interested in most of them. If you don't think a person is a good fit for your company, use the interview to dig up information on your competitors or create a business-development opportunity. (Who knows where your company's next alliance partner will come from?)
4. **Ask Probing Questions:** The only way to find out if candidates will be a good fit for your company is to ask a lot of questions to discover whether:
 - They possess a positive attitude
 - They have high energy
 - They are trustworthy and possess good character
 - They feel good about themselves and life
 - They take responsibility without making excuses
 - They desire to keep learning and hunger for growth
 - They are willing to follow the leader and work with the team
 - They have a good track record
 - They are able to flow with the organization and accept change
5. **Check References:** Today's employment laws are extremely strict on how much information can be obtained regarding past employment; previous employers are not supposed to give out any information other than length of employment. They cannot give out any information with regard to skills, attitude, attendance or anything else in the applicant's job history while employed there.
6. **Clarify Expectations:** New employees seldom know exactly what is expected of them, how they will be measured, or with whom they will work the most. It's important to communicate expectations and metrics clearly and succinctly from Day One.
7. **Offer Attractive Compensation:** Money buys the house and the bacon, but it also represents recognition and fairness. Talented people expect their contributions to be acknowledged and their compensation to reflect their impact. If necessary, do a competitive compensation survey.

8. **Establish a Buddy System:** Often overlooked yet consistently successful, mentoring systems give employees a sense of history and community when they enter an new company environment. By introducing recruits to the office culture immediately, mentors make them feel important and necessary to the company's success.
9. **Develop People to Their Full Potential:** Every company leaves a tremendous amount of human potential untapped because its people are inadequately developed.

Provide informal feedback and coaching, cross training and opportunities for advancement. Train all new employees thoroughly in job requirements immediately upon hiring. Putting a new employee on the joy to "sink or swim" results in frustration, sloppy work habits and omission of important details. Reinforce the attitudes and behavior patterns you want. A new employee is usually highly receptive to suggestions and eagerly assimilates and readily accepts the organizational vision, mission and goals.

10. **Conduct Exit Interviews:** Retention of talent often begins at the end of the process. Chances are, an employee who is walking out the door will be more honest and forthcoming than a person who still depends on you company for a paycheck. But in order to ensure truly effective exit interviews, a leader must establish a climate of trust long before he receives the letter of resignation or notice of leave.

Reprinted from Stengel Solutions, written by Heather Brighton and Geri Stengel.

2015 NIFAD Annual Meeting June 24-25 • Chicago, IL



The 2015 NIFAD conference will be held at the Talbott Hotel, located in the heart of Chicago.

The hotel offers business center services onsite as well as valet or self parking, a full-service spa, lap pool, and privileges at Equinox Health Club. Dining options include The Little Market Brasserie and 24-hour room service. Complimentary wireless internet access and daily newspapers are also offered.

NIFAD has rooms blocked for June 22 - 25 with a group rate of \$209. Be sure to identify you are with National Independent Fire Alarm Distributors to get our special rate.

To make reservations call: 1-800-825-2688

Enjoy networking with colleagues and learning about what's new in the industry through educational seminars and suppliers presentations.

UPDATE from Vic Humm

Denise Pappas, Gordon Bailey, both from Valcom, and myself did a presentation on the new Class “N” for NFPA 72 2016 in Orlando, FL at the BISCO Winter conference at the end of February. I have permission to share the presentation, which I’ll have Bev email out separately. The following week in Orlando, I attended SupDet (NFPA Fire Research) Presentation of papers also in Orlando, FL. The following link allows the reader to download the various presentations from the NFPA SupDet conference.

www.nfpa.org/supdet2015papers

There are three presentations that I urge each NIFAD Member and their respective staff to review:

- By Larry Shudak of UL on the new points for the 10th editions of UL 864.
- The presentation on the subject of CO migration through construction materials with residential type being of concern.
- The third one is by the US Gov. Consumer Public Safety Commission on the effects of some testing aerosols on CO sensors for alarms and detectors.

As the annual meeting in Chicago Mc Cormack Place draws closer, interesting information is surfacing. There are a number of NITMANS (Notice of Intent to Make a Motion). This writer has one which is currently tagged as #41. This is in regard to the change of the flash pulse width being reduced from a maximum of 200ms to 20ms proposed by Tyco. The Second Revision identity is SR 71. This writer chairs a UL Task Group to determine what values are scientifically correct. The intent of this group is not to restrict technology but have established values, which could be different, and let the field spacing of visual appliances remain the same.

NITMAM # 41 is moving to reject SR 71 and return the paragraph to previous language. When solid scientific values for human factor response is repeatable and then confirmed what the human response is to visual flashes, then a Tentative Interim Amendment (TIA) will be put forth with proper values. This would affect only the 2016 edition.

Another idea that might be helpful is to have some GO-To Meeting sessions on the new Class “N”, which I would be glad volunteer to do for NFIFD, if it has the Go-To Meeting or equal available. It would also be of good value to AHJ’s in each of the NIFAD’s area of service to allow the effect of establishing an equivalency. When a new method is not recognized in the referenced edition, such as NFPA 72 is in the edition referenced in the local ordinance.

During this time all NITMAM’s submitted are being reviewed by the NFPA Standard’s Council. If more than one is addressing the same subject paragraph in the code, then one will be picked to put forth as a CAM {Certified Amended Motion}. On the floor of the annual technical session, the assembled members can vote to either reject the NITMAM or move it forward.

It is the intent of the UL Task Group, which the writer chairs, to have Oklahoma State University School of Fire Protection, under the direction of Dr. Bryan Hopkins, conduct the human factor study over a reasonably spread of age groups. This will also be wonderful training for the fire protection students, too.

Underwriter’s Laboratories, Inc. and Underwriters Laboratories of Canada, as of last September, are now encouraging the implementation for new terminology for the applied logo for labeling. The new term is Certified and the graphics of the logo is different, too. This information is available on the UL website.

Currently, UL is allowing the subscriber to retain the current label of listed, or use the new graphic. New subscribers are encouraged to use the new label format, but can continue with the term listed. AHJ's and organizations such as NFPA are going to have to revise their ordinances and publication documents to permit either term.

The NFPA research group has concern that industry and first responders need to develop messaging that alerts the public in the same manner as the flashing lights when a school bus stops to either board or drop students off. With the current turmoil in the world, this format will allow the public to receive and follow more common directions in a more uniform basis.

In the interim, I could suggest to the designer of record and the representative of the AHJ in their jurisdiction, sign off on the text of canned messages and copy them to sheets for the As-Built Drawing set. This is quite important in school and college settings.

While at UL about a week ago, I learned there is only one manufacturer of UPS listed by fire alarm systems, extinguishing systems, etc. The listing criteria is in UL 1481 and none for Canada. Traditionally, I had always used a listed UPS in either Canada or the USA, when the situation warranted. I will do some additional research to understand what is correct.



Reliable Celebrates

Reliable Fire and Security is celebrating 60 years as a company. To commemorate this milestone an event will be held on May 16, 2015.

Congratulations to member Reliable Fire & Security for this noteworthy accomplishment.

NFPA Dates



Mark your calendar and plan to attend these NFPA Conferences.

2015	2016	2017
June 22-25	June 13-16	June 4-7
Chicago	Las Vegas	Boston
McCormick Place Convention Center	Mandalay Bay Convention Center	Boston Convention Center & Exhibition Center



NIFAD Board Positions

At this years annual meeting, we will hold elections of board of directors for NIFAD.

If you have an interest in serving on the board please contact the NIFAD office ASAP.

Email: apmsthomas@aol.com

Or phone 515-440-6057