

October
2020

National
Independent
Fire Alarm
Distributors

NIFADNews

Calendar of Events

AFAA National Codes Conference

May 3-6, 2021
Phoenix, AZ

NIFAD Annual Meeting

June 20-22, 2021
Park MGM
Las Vegas, NV

NFPA Convention

June 22-25, 2021
Las Vegas, NV

*Mark your
calendar
and plan
to attend!*



From the President's Desk

By Jarrett Ryan, NIFAD President

Fellow NIFAD Members,

It's hard to imagine that we are now entering the homestretch of 2020. In a year that has seen so many interesting challenges to our businesses and industry, yet we continue to persevere, pushing forward to position our businesses for success in the upcoming new year. Many of us are in or are about to dive into strategic planning sessions to map out those plans, and NIFAD is no different.

As we look forward to the new year, NIFAD continues to keep a watchful eye on the industry. Codes and Standards do not take a break, so we are thankful to have Richard Roberts keeping a pulse on what is happening or maybe happening in the world of code updates. You will see his latest update in this newsletter.

Our NIFAD Board of Directors continues to work on plans for 2021 for the association. We have secured space at the Park MGM in Las Vegas for our 2021 Annual Conference. The board is certainly aware of the challenges still facing the trade show and travel industry during the pandemic, but with the conference

still eight months away, the hope is some of the innovations around mitigating COVID 19 will be in place so that we can get everyone together again in June. We will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates as we get closer.

I want to again thank all members, both Distributor and Suppliers, for your support of NIFAD. This organization is here for you and your businesses. If there is anything we can do as an organization to help you through this, please do not hesitate to reach out. We are all in this together!

In closing, I want to take a moment to remember Nanci Donahue. As many of you are aware, Nanci passed away this past August after a battle with cancer. Nanci, along with Mike, have been very important contributors to the success of NIFAD. We have had some very fun and spirited meetings with her in the room. We will miss those times but walk away with very fond memories. Our condolences to Mike and the Donahue family.

Jarret Ryan
NIFAD President

Codes & Standards Updates

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Activities relating to In-Building Emergency Responder Communications are as follows:
 - a. NICET is requesting industry experts complete a Validation Survey on the draft Occupational Practice Analysis that establishes the foundation of the new certification program intended to raise the level of competency of technicians that design, install, inspect and maintain BDA systems
 - b. A new FCC/DoE announced [inter-agency work group \(WG\)](#) to determine how modern building materials affect wireless propagation and exploring modifications to building codes that will promote wireless spectrum efficiency
 - c. The NFPA 1225 Committee will petition the Fire Protection Research Foundation (FPRF) to conduct a research project to determine the temperature at which the voice message will be degraded in a public safety backbone coaxial cable
2. Development of future codes & standards that will enhance public life safety are as follows:
 - a. NFPA 72: Seven of the nine Committees have resolved 284 Public Comments (PC's) during the second draft meetings for the 2022 edition of the Code. Several Committee actions of importance to the industry and the fire service relate to cybersecurity, remote access, low frequency and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors.
 - b. NFPA 915: The NFPA Standards Council approved releasing the new Standard relating to Remote Inspections for public review
 - c. NFPA 715: The NFPA Standards Council approved releasing the new Standard relating to the Installation of Fuel Gases Detection and Warning Equipment for public review
 - d. NFPA 855: A Public Input (PI) for the 2023 edition of the energy storage systems (ESS) standard that specifically references lithium battery off-gas detection as a method for preventing thermal runaway
 - e. International Fire Code (IFC): Several Fire Code Action Committee (FCAC) work groups seeking to expand the requirements for mass notification, low frequency and CO detection for the 2024 edition of Code
 - f. NFPA 1225: The Safer Buildings Coalition (SBC) codes & standards committee is reviewing four draft Public Comments (PC's) for the 2022 edition of the standard

DETAIL REPORT

1. Activities relating to In-Building Emergency Responder Communications are as follows:
 - a. National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies (NICET):
 - The Validation Survey is intended to receive feedback from as many industry practitioners as possible on the draft Occupational Practice Analysis before beginning the curriculum development phase. The Analysis identifies the major duties and related tasks as well as the necessary knowledge, skills, and traits for technicians that design, install, inspect and maintain BDA systems. The Analysis has established three different levels of certification for installers and a level specifically for system designers. Validation Survey responses will be evaluated by NICET and the Steering Committee to determine if changes are needed to the Analysis. The next step in the development of the new certification program is the curriculum development phase
 - b. Federal Communications Commission (FCC)/Department of Energy (DoE):

- The objective of the WG is to collaborate to produce thoughtful code requirements that will expand in-building wireless communications opportunities. The WG is needed because various codes have imposed higher energy efficiency requirements and the use of certain materials (such as metal-coated windows, double-pane windows, and metal foil barriers) that have degraded the propagation wireless communications signals into and out of buildings.
 - Properly understanding how Code changes affect propagation characteristics of wireless signals is critically important to the BDA industry.
- c. Fire Protection Research Foundation (FPRF):
- The research project is needed because the current survivability requirement in NFPA 1225 is unsubstantiated because there is no technical data to justify installing backbone cables in an enclosure that matches the building's fire rating. The current survivability requirement is costly for the building and may not ensure effective voice communications during a fire.

2. Development of Future Codes & Standards:

a. 2022 Edition of NFPA 72®, *National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code*:

- Below is a summary of several key Committee actions during the second draft (SD) meetings:
 - § Cybersecurity: Created a new annex chapter that provides guidelines for cybersecurity measures which will mitigate the risk from connecting fire alarm and emergency communication systems to the internet or an intranet. The Committee decided to place guidelines in the annex instead of the body of the Code to allow manufacturers, installation companies, insurance companies, enforcement authorities an opportunity to review the guidelines before making them mandatory.
 - § Remote Access: Allow resetting, silencing, diagnostics, software updates and reacceptance testing of software changes provided that certain requirements are met. The embedded Word file provides the specific requirements.



Remote Access.docx

- § Low Frequency: Expanded the list of rooms or spaces where the low frequency audible fire alarm signal should be installed. Several examples are common spaces within dwelling units or hotel suites such as living rooms and dens that have couches or sleeping furniture. The proposal is needed to remove the ambiguity in the current requirement to install the low frequency signal in sleeping areas. The term sleeping area is undefined and is causing design and enforcement issues because there are areas other than a bedroom that can reasonably be used for sleeping.
 - CO Detection: The Committee approved a Honeywell Public Comment (PC) that prohibits duct mounted CO detectors from being used as a substitute for open area CO detectors. The change is needed because there are products that are being sold as a substitute for open area CO detectors even though there is no product performance listing (i.e. the alarm threshold) for duct mounted CO detectors
 - The next step in the process is the official ballot of the SD Committee actions
- b. NFPA 915, *Standard for Remote Inspection*:
- The Public Input closing date will be 6/1/2021

- The scope of the new Standard is to provide the minimum requirements for authorities having jurisdiction (AHJ's) to perform remote inspections of fire protection systems that will deliver an equivalent or improved assessment as physically conducting the inspection at the building
- c. NFPA 715, Installation of Fuel Gases Detection and Warning Equipment:
 - The Public Input closing date of 10/15/2020
 - The scope of the new Standard is to specify how to install, inspect, test and maintain devices that detect combustible gases such as natural gas, methane and propane. The new Standard has the potential of expanding the market for the detection of combustible gases.
- d. NFPA 855: Currently the standard only requires a method to prevent thermal runaway protection. I am currently vetting the PI with key stakeholders and addressing any issues before for the first draft meeting that is scheduled for December of 2020.
- e. 2024 Edition of the International Fire Code (IFC):
 - Below is a summary of the draft proposals:
 - Mass Notification Risk Analysis: Expand the requirement to perform a mass notification risk analysis beyond new colleges/universities buildings to include new K-12 schools
 - Low Frequency Audible Fire Alarm Signal: Expand the requirement to provide the low frequency signal beyond dwelling units in apartment buildings, hotels and university dormitories to include assisted living facilities
 - CO Detection: Prohibit duct CO detectors from being used as a substitute for open area CO detectors
- f. 2022 Edition of NFPA 1225, *Standard for the Installation, Maintenance, and Use of Emergency Services Communications Systems*:
 - Below is a summary of the draft proposals that have been sent to SBC and other stakeholders:
 - To remove the requirement for Backbone cables and backbone cable components to be installed in metal conduit. The proposal is needed because installing cable in metal conduit adds unnecessary cost to the installation of the system without improving the performance or solving a known problem that is occurring in the field.
 - Permit a single supervisory signal at an approved on-site location or transmitted to a remote supervision station if the building has no fire alarm system
 - Reference the correct NFPA standard that provides lightning protection

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If you have any questions, concerns or feedback throughout the year, please feel free to reach out to any of these members.

Additionally, if you have any member referrals, please forward them to any board member for follow up.

Our Condolences to Mike Donahue and Family



Longtime NIFAD member, Nanci Donahue, passed away August 25, 2020. She is survived by her beloved husband, Mike, and their two children.

Nanci always had a smile on her face and brightened the room when she walked in. Nanci was active in Pyro-Comm Systems and an integral part of their business.

Due to the corona virus, a memorial service will be held in 2021. We will all miss her!

Forecasts From The Kiplinger Letter

A risk heightened by the pandemic:

Cybersecurity threats against businesses sparked, in large part, by the shift to remote work and a surge of cybercriminals exploiting virus fears. Many businesses are still behind the curve. Here's the outlook for security threats.

Information security spending will rise 6% for the year globally...a strong showing, considering many companies cut their IT budgets.

Spending is set to pick up further in 2021 in the \$125 billion market, over 40% of it U.S.- based. Spending by government ...federal, state, and local...and the telecom industry has been notably strong.

Priorities have shifted to tackle new threats.

Cloud-related security spending is spiking to protect web-based apps, a ripe target for hackers.

Among the top actions businesses are taking to address the new risks:

Making sure remote workforces are secure through virtual private networks and multiple layers of defense. Vendors in that area:

Akamai, Cloudflare and Cisco.

Locking down web-based applications by updating nonsecure IT settings...a top weak spot ...or using security tools from Alert Logic, CloudAware and others.

Shoring up passwords by pairing user passwords with one-time PINs from mobile apps, or using USB security tokens, such as FIDO2 keys, or smart cards. Vendors that help eliminate passwords include FaceTec, iProov and Veridium.

Boosting the ability to detect and respond to threats with detection software with vendors such as Palo Alto Networks, FireEye, McAfee, Trend Micro and Fortinet.

Launching more-frequent workplace-security awareness training sessions so that workers stay vigilant and don't click on suspicious links that may be malware.

NIFAD Annual Meeting

June 20-22, 2021

Park MGM
Las Vegas, NV



NIFAD has sleeping rooms
blocked June 20-22, 2021.

Our room rate, Sunday through Wednesday,
is \$79 single or double

Park MGM is The Strip's newest destination resort, and has quickly become one of the city's go-to places for entertainment, dining and more. Guests will be able to enjoy many of the resort's most popular outlets including the vibrant Italian marketplace, Eataly; Bavette's Steakhouse; Primrose; and the pool.

More information available in Spring 2021.