

AFAANJ Spec-I-Fire

Volume 2, Issue 2

April 2008

Our Next Meeting Is May 15

Please note we have changed the location of our meetings.

Meetings and seminars will now to be held at the Hanover Manor in East Hanover NJ

As the service and quality declined as the cost rose the AFAANJ decided to find a new location that was both convenient and affordable. To this end we chose the Hanover Manor, many of us regularly attend NJ SFPE meetings there as well as some of the seminars the NJ SFPE had there in the past. The service has always been excellent, the food delicious and the cost works out to be a couple of dollars less per person. This added to the fact that loud meetings will not be overpowering our guest speakers through a folding wall! The Hanover Manor is off Route 280 between exits one and two; please go to our website WWW.AFAANJ.org for a link to a map.

**The Hanover Manor
16 Eagle Rock Avenue
East Hanover, NJ 07936
(973) 992-7425 • (973) 887-2682**

Be sure to RSVP: to Dennis DeCarlo at 973 - 429 - 4846 or by email d.decarlometrofire@verizon.net

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A word or two from the AFAANJ President;

Edward Armm, SET
Sr. Consultant RJA

As I write this I am preparing for the National AFAA 2008 Codes Conference and Annual Meeting which is being held on April 15-18, 2008 at the Historic Menger Hotel located at the Alamo Plaza in San Antonio, TX Tuesday morning we have a Board of Directors meeting which I attend as an advisor and the Chair of the National Education Committee, after lunch from 1:00 to 5:00 is the Member Association Round Table. Following that is registration and the technical seminars begin bright and early on Wednesday continuing to Thursday afternoon. For those of you that may not be aware our own Bob Boyer is the Director of the National Board.

Each of the past 8 years NJ has been represented by Bob and me, it is time some of you consider attending. By the way, Ed Reid was the last other member from NJ to attend. For the past 8 or 9 years programs have been added to keep our spouses busy and entertained while we attend seminars and a trade show.

Last year I was honored twice at the meeting, once to accept the State Association of the Year award, this was no surprise as I know we have the BEST AFAA State Association; however, it is nice that everyone knows it now. Secondly I was presented with the AFAA Service Award, for those of you that know me when I say I was at a loss for words you understand the gravity of such a statement. It took the whole chapter and most specially YOUR Board of Directors to earn the State Association Award, the Service Award was won much easier, all that I had to do is what I do, that is to work in order give back to the industry that feeds clothes and provides a home for me. I believe that it is my duty to do what I do as this industry is special, we provide life safety we don't sell a commodity.

On Page 3 is a picture of Bob presenting me with the State Association of the Year Award, it was extra special coming from an old friend and someone so well respected in our industry.

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Our speaker for May 15

Our technical presentation for this evening will be provided by Peter Schmidt who is an Account Manager of Firestop Solutions a Division of MEDIGAS Life Safety Group. Peter's presentation will cover requirements for the proper firestopping of through penetrations in floors and walls. Some of the points Peter will stress include the facts that;

- Smoke and toxic gases are the leading cause of death in fires
- 3/4 of fire deaths caused by smoke inhalation
- Approximately 57% of people killed in fires are not in the room of origin
- Smoke travels 120-420 feet per minute under fire conditions

Peter Schmidt is committed to raising the standards of life safety and building preservation through public awareness and improved regulatory practices in the firestop industry. He is actively involved with the training of building professionals, including Inspectors, Fire Marshals, and the Department of Health.

Recently, he has had the opportunity to write the firestopping specification for the code compliance division of the Dormitory Authority for the State of New York and train over 50 engineers for the PANYNJ in preparation of proper firestop inspections on the Freedom Tower. Peter Schmidt is employed by Firestop Solutions, the country's first Factory Mutual FM 4991 Contractor, first Hilti Accredited, and soon to be one of the first UL Approved Firestop Contractors.

Firestop Solutions is a division of Medigas Lifesafety Group.

Our full day seminar for May 15 is Fire Alarm Plan Review

Our president Ed Armm who is certified to teach all AFAA classes, which by the way, are all now certified and approved for CPD and CEU points by both the Department of Community Affairs and The Department of Consumer Affairs in NJ. This means that if you need points for NICET, your license or your permit our classes will cover your needs. (Many of our evening presentations carry AIA CEU credit as well)

As for the Fire Alarm Plan Review Class, this application course describes the common problems associated with the plan review process and offers suggestions for improvement by providing plan review and acceptance test checklists, spreadsheets for determining battery and voltage drop calculations,

exercises to determine proper spacing of smoke detectors, exercises for determining proper audibility of fire alarm notification appliances and for determining proper sizing and placement of visible notification appliances. This seminar is intended for authorities having jurisdiction involved in fire alarm system plan review, salespeople that have to provide a bid based on plans, contractors providing submittal documentation for plan review and fire alarm system designers.

Course Materials –

1. Student course book and handout workbook (provided)
2. Compass (provided)
3. Calculator, architects rule, pencils and note paper (Student to provide)

Course Outline –

1. Review of Code Requirements for Plan Review and Submittals based on International Building Code - 2006 and NFPA 5000, Building Construction and Safety Codes (emphasis on the IBC as used in NJ)
2. Review of pre-plan and plan review checklists
3. Battery calculation training and exercises
4. Voltage drop training and exercises
5. Smoke detector spacing requirements training and exercises
6. Fire alarm audibility requirements training and exercises
7. Fire alarm visibility requirements training and exercises
8. Review of pre-acceptance and acceptance testing checklists

This is a full day class; it begins at 7:30 with a continental breakfast, all attendees are to be seated and ready to begin at 8:00 AM.

See our website www.AFAANJ.org for details or to download a registration form, you can pay by check or through National Credit Cards, there will be an additional fee of \$25, if you delay past April 30.

Other one day seminars from AFAANJ;

September 18 - [Fire Alarm System Testing and Inspection](#)

November 20 - [Understanding the Fire Alarm Requirements of the 2006 IBC](#)

You can download applications for the above seminars at our website WWW.AFAANJ.org

AFAANJ Executive Board presents a check for \$1,000 to Beverly Foster of the Saint Barnabas Burn Foundation.

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From the left, Roy Polizzi of Professional Security Consultants Inc, Frank Minutillo of Alarm and Communication Technologies, AFAANJ President Ed Armm of Rolf Jensen & Associates, Inc., Beverly, Chairman of the AFAA National Board of Directors Bob Boyer of GE, Security and AFAANJ Vice President Richard Ravaioli of Survivor Fire & Security Systems

AFAANJ is considering sponsoring children to the Arthur C. Luf Children's Burn Camp.

Upcoming Meeting Technical Presentations

September 18th will be a presentation geared toward the owners of our member companies, General Liability and Errors and Omissions Insurance. Non-members are welcome the cost of a general meeting for nonmembers is \$45.00 which is refundable if you become a member within a year of your first meeting.

November 28th our technical presentation will be either Designing Systems for Audibility and Intelligibility or Designing Systems to be Code Compliant.

Elections Will Be Held At Our May Meeting

There are two open seats on the Board of Directors. One is due to Keith Kesheneff stepping down as our treasurer, the position was filled by a member at large and we now have that seat to fill as well as one more. Jim Loftus of SimplexGrinnell has graciously accepted one of the nominations. Other nominations will be accepted from the floor.

Last Spec-I-Fire we reported in error that Dennis DeCarlo was our new treasurer; in reality it was Frank Minutillo who stepped up to the plate. However, Dennis is now providing us with a secretary.



Bob Boyer presenting Ed Armm with the State Association of the Year Award.

I say it was easy because as I said, I find it easy to give back to the AFAA, what I don't understand as your president is what it takes to get the Fire Alarm Community in New Jersey to see who it is that fights in Trenton, Washington, at the NFPA and ICC for our industry, it is the AFAA! AFAANJ has 42 member companies, and two full member AHJ's this out of a state where over 800 Fire Alarm Permits were issued? How can that be?

We provide training at a reduced rate to members, if you have one man attend the seminars we offer in the span of one year you're even, two men your ahead and in joining AFAANJ you add to our membership, this shows the state and some people in Trenton that we have a voice and will not be pushed around.

There is currently a bill in Trenton that will limit those that work on suppression systems to union fitters; this includes automatic fire sprinklers as well as special hazard systems. If we let this pass how long before only union electricians can install fire detection and notification systems.

I wish I knew the magic it takes to get members, not just names on a list but people willing to participate and actively become members of AFAANJ. I ask each and every member company to bring in one of your competitors, the more those competing with you for a project know about how life safety systems are really supposed to be installed and maintained the better it is for everyone, not just the industry but the public in general.

In closing I want to sincerely thank my friend Keith Kesheneff for his many years of service to the industry and AFAANJ. Nothing but the best Keith!

Closing a Permit, the UCC Certificate.

By **John Drucker**, Fire Protection Subcode Official

You file an application to install a fire alarm system; the Local Enforcing Agency (LEA) has reviewed the application and issues a permit pursuant to the NJ Uniform Construction Code (NJUCC). The permit is actually made up of two permits, one for work performed under the electrical subcode, i.e. the wiring, and one for work performed under the fire protection subcode, i.e. the fire protection equipment.

In many cases a fire alarm contractor files the job and does the work, occasionally a fire alarm contractor files the job and subcontractors perform the work and often an electrical contractor files the job and the fire alarm contractor supports the work with equipment, engineering, technical assistance and startup, so called "parts and smarts".

To the LEA this relationship is invisible; the applicant, the persons and/or companies name that appears on the permit application is responsible for the work. This occurs because often the applicant is other than the owner and signs the "agent section" of the UCC Permit Folder (UCC F-100), the so called "jacket" which provides; *I hereby certify the following as required by the Uniform Construction Code, N.J.A.C. 5:23-2.15(d): the proposed work is authorized by the owner in fee; and I have been authorized by the owner in fee to make this application as his agent. (UCC F-100-2)*

In effect the applicant establishes the authority to act as an agent of the building owner to the LEA for the purposes of the permit. LEA's don't get involved with contractual arrangements between the owner and contractors so long as all licensing regulations are complied with. It's the applicant who's responsible for obtaining the permit and performing the work in accordance with the code and ultimately the building owner who's responsible that his or her building meets code.

Now that we've established this relationship let's look at obtaining the UCC Certificate of Occupancy or Approval. If you take a closer look at the Fire Protection Subcode Application, UCC F-140, you will notice in the bottom left hand corner of the form a section titled "Subcode Approval for Certificate" directly under that a check box "CA" for "Certificate of Approval". In the case of new construction it's a "CO" or Certificate of Occupancy" The goal is to get obtain the certificate.

The certificate serves as written validation by the LEA of inspection, completion and close out of the permit. However there's another reason to obtain a CO or CA, to receive final payment when the work involves a home improvement (HI) project. Many contractors don't realize that in order to receive final payment a final inspection is required on HI projects; *N.J.A.C. 13:45A-16.2* provides that *"Final Inspections are required before final payment is made to contractor.*

This language can be found on the back of the yellow permit card issued by the LEA that is required to be posted at the job site. When pointed out many contractors explain that they never noticed and or read that. Failure to comply could result in a complaint to the NJ Department of Consumer Affairs. Evidence of an approved final inspection is a CO or CA.

Assuming that the requisite rough inspections have been completed we move to the final inspection. Final Inspections however are more complex and often involve multiple trades such as Elevator, Mechanical, Sprinkler, Building Automation, Security and General Contractors. The NJUCC by way of the IBC/NJ, IMC and NFPA-72 stipulates requirements for system interfaces and building safety functions such as fire pump supervision, elevator recall, shunt trip, fan shutdown, damper control, door release and unlocking....., all issues that the fire alarm contractor must contend with. And let's not forget the provision in NFPA-72 where smoke detectors aren't supposed to be installed until after final construction cleanup. The fire alarm contractor has quite a bit on his and her plate so to speak.

As I wrote earlier the LEA is not responsible for coordinating and or managing any aspect of the work. I often hear fire alarm contractors explain the scope of their contract, extra's, disputes with the GC, Architect or Engineer and or not being paid. These may all be valid contractual issues worthy of attorney but they are irrelevant to the final inspection and certificate of approval. The inspector's job is to verify by way of acceptance inspection and testing that an installed "system" meets code, no more no less. Remember it's the applicant's responsibility, and not the LEA's, to provide a code compliant system. That may seem frustrating at times but it's the nature of fire alarm work.

Final Inspections are not automatic. There is no crystal ball that the LEA peers into to determine when to go out to a project for final inspection. The scheduling of final inspections is the responsibility of the applicant.

So the big day arrives, Final Inspection! Everyone's there, the buildings in move in condition and the techs are raring to go. Are they prepared ?, do they have the released plans on site ?, Documentation such as NFPA-72 Record of Completion ?, Adequate Tools such as meters, smoke test poles, radios, ladders, manometer ?, are the Operating Instructions posted ?, Is the supervising station connection active ?.

Sadly many final inspections fail because the alarm contractor is ill prepared to conduct a 100% acceptance test as required by the NJUCC, IBC and NFPA-72.

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Often work is found to be incomplete such as fan shutdown not being connected or changes during construction that require protection unaddressed, to not having the proper testing tools. To be successful it's imperative that alarm contractor's survey and pretest to determine that the system is complete, operational, and compliant with the code. Technicians need to have the proper testing tools and be well versed in their use.

When all is said and done a final inspection should be as I like to say "a dog and pony show". The outcome should be repeatable, and yes it can be achieved. As an inspector there is nothing more satisfying then approval on the first try. The building owner appreciates it, the LEA appreciates it and the alarm contractor comes away with a sense of pride and a certificate.

I was asked to address the issue of inspectors who "pull a manual station hear the bells and issue an approval sticker". We'll let me say this is in direct conflict with the NJUCC. *DCA Bulletin 94-6 issued September 1, 1994 states; "The fire protection inspector is responsible for the selection of type of system, approval of its components such as alarm initiating devices and alarm indicating appliances and their location and for conducting acceptance tests."*

Remember however that public safety and the reputation of the industry are at stake here. No matter what an inspector does or doesn't do it's up to the alarm contractor to assure that the system provided will achieve the intended fire protection goal.

John Drucker in addition to being a municipal fire protection subcode official, is a 32 year veteran of the fire service attaining the rank of captain of a combination truck/engine company, and served as senior project manager for Siemens Fire Safety at the World Trade Center from 1993 to 2001.

John is also a member of AFAANJ (editor)



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WE SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE NICET CERTIFICATION

News from the Contractors Advisory Board

By Rich Ravaioli VP AFAANJ

The Contractor's Advisory Board meeting in February was cancelled.

The Contractor's Advisory Board meeting for March even though not cancelled had only four Board members show up.

It looks like the NFPA Standard 25 Inspection, testing and Maintenance of Water Based Fire Suppression Systems forms will be submitted to the Codes Council for review and comments.

In addition, we will be submitting the Kitchen Fire Suppression Inspection, Testing and Maintenance forms for review and comment.

NFPA Professional Development Seminar Week, AC, NJ. April 14-18

- [Disaster/Emergency Management and Business Continuity Programs \(NFPA 1600\)](#)
- [Automatic Sprinkler Systems](#)
- [Life Safety Code®](#)
- [Fire Protection Systems Plans Review](#)
- [National Electrical Code®](#)
- [National Fire Alarm Code®](#)
- [Inspection, Testing and Maintenance of Fire Alarms](#)
- [Fire Protection Systems and Equipment Maintenance](#)
- [Fire Alarm Interfaces](#)
- [Electrical Standard for Industrial Machinery \(NFPA 79\)](#)