



APPA Code Advocacy Impacts Campus Fire Officials

By Alan Sactor

Campus fire officials at APPA member institutions may not be aware of the impact of APPA code advocacy efforts. Some campus fire officials are involved in code development, usually through direct association with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), International Code Council (ICC), or by individually submitting comments on proposals. Because APPA is primarily associated with facilities management, campus fire officials may not always be aware of the code advocacy efforts. APPA members are encouraged to educate campus fire officials at APPA institutions on these efforts.

APPA provides full-time involvement in code advocacy through generous staff support from the University of Michigan. Members of the APPA Standards and Codes Council dedicate time and expertise in the interest of member institutions. It takes time and energy to track and assess the broad spectrum of international codes and standards that are constantly under development. Effective code advocacy is similar to a chess game—it requires thinking that is always several moves ahead. APPA provides that proactive strategy.

APPA ACTION

Success doesn't always come on the first try. APPA recognizes this, and also embraces it. By submitting proposals and comments—even though they might not be successful—code and standards organizations are put on notice that more action from APPA will follow.

Nowhere has this been more successful than APPA's proposal to NFPA to create a specific code for colleges and universities. The NFPA Standards Council rejected the proposal, but opened the doors to working with APPA to address the needs of the campus environment. The result will be a ground breaking joint platform—initially available in electronic form—which will have a widespread impact on campus fire officials. While still in negotiation at the moment, the direction of development of the joint APPA/NFPA platform will permit industry-specific annotations and exceptions to run side by side with pages of various NFPA documents, starting with the NFPA *Life Safety Code*®.

APPA actively encourages campus fire officials and other campus representatives to serve on NFPA committees to assure that college and university interests are represented. APPA draws on the expertise of committee members to track code development and further strategy. When issues involving a particular code or standard impact one campus, they generally affect all campuses.

The concepts of integrated fire and life safety system testing were being put into practice at Harvard University with the guidance of NFPA 3 (*Recommended Practice for Commissioning and Integrated Testing of Fire Protection and Life Safety Systems*). Paul Dunphy, an electrical inspector and compliance coordinator at Harvard, became a staunch advocate of integrated fire and life safety system testing on all of the university's new building projects, and

for most of the more involved renovation projects.¹ Dunphy felt that the practice of testing and commissioning was of real value to universities and APPA agreed.

NFPA is currently developing a new standard, NFPA 4 (*Standard for Integrated Testing of Fire Protection and Life Safety Systems*), and revamping NFPA 3, which remains a recommended practice. Dunphy now represents APPA as a principal member of the Technical Committee for Commissioning and Integrated Testing, working on both NFPA 3 and NFPA 4.

APPA GOALS

APPA goals are in line with campus fire officials. While safety is a primary driver of APPA's code advocacy effort, cost can also be a factor. In many cases they go hand in hand, as money and resources can be conserved without affecting safety. For example, APPA had significant success on NFPA 25 (*Standard for the Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems*) by proposing that the frequency of observed fire pump runs be reduced from weekly to monthly.

Campus fire officials try to ensure that testing frequencies are met, even though sometimes acknowledging that they might not be practical. APPA utilized the experience of campus and allied federal experts to support the position that monthly testing of electric motor driven pumps does not reduce reliability. Even though energy costs, water usage, and sometimes even labor costs are reduced, cost reduction is not always an immediate or guaranteed outcome. Integrated testing of fire and

life safety systems as prescribed by NFPA 4 may increase construction costs, but buildings will be safer and long-term savings could result as systems operate in a more efficient manner.

APPA STRATEGY

APPA strategy includes more than tracking code development. Mike Anthony, a member of APPA's Standards and Code Council, believes that influencing and contributing to the codes-setting process requires staying in front of trends. Developing professional relationships and coalitions and promoting innovation in technologies are key components of the forward thinking strategy.²

APPA represents a \$175 billion dollar industry that purchases a significant amount of fire protection and life safety equipment. When this is combined with the expertise of fire officials, fire protection managers, and facilities profes-

sionals of APPA member institutions, it can create incentive for innovation. The educational environment is ripe for proven products that can improve fire and life safety.

SUMMARY

Although campus fire officials may not be aware, the impact of APPA code advocacy on fire and life safety is significant. APPA employs proactive strategies to gain positive win-win outcomes on fire and life safety issues. Fire and life safety standards and codes are addressed, along with economic and resource considerations, by utilizing the experience and expertise from member institutions and allied industries.

The business of standards and code development is international, complicated, and fast paced. APPA maintains effective presence through professional leadership and dedicated individuals

from member institutions. Hopefully, the information presented here will inspire APPA members to collaborate with their local campus fire safety officials. ⑤

ENDNOTES

1. Dunphy, P. (2011). How Colleges and Universities Can Demonstrate the Value of the New NFPA 3. *NFPA Journal*, September/October 2011. Retrieved from www.nfpa.org.
2. Anthony, M. (2012). Foreword. *2011-2012 Public Policy Agenda: Standards and Code Issue Priorities of the APPA Code Advocacy Task Force* (pp. 3-4). Alexandria, Virginia: APPA.

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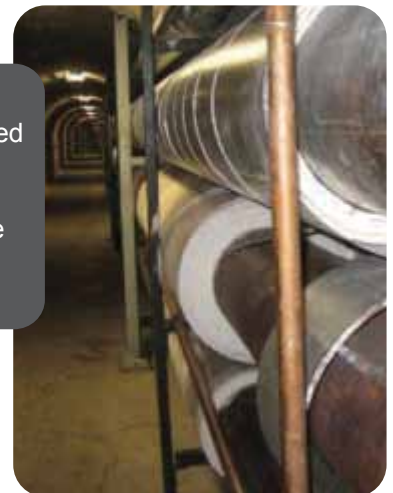
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