



P.O. Box 1000, Patterson, New York 12563
Telephone: (845) 878-4200
FAX: (845) 878-4215

NFSA Bulletin

For more information, contact:
David Vandeyar at (845) 878-4200 ext. 119
E-Mail: vandeyar@nfsa.org

NFPA Technical Committee Votes to Strengthen Sprinkler Requirements

Friday, July 11, 2003, Patterson, New York – On July 8 – 9, 2003, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Technical Committee on Assembly Occupancies voted to increase requirements for fire sprinklers. If passed by the Assembly Committee and the Technical Correlating Committees, who are being balloted this week, and the Standards Council, who is scheduled to meet next week, NFPA 101 *Life Safety Code*[™] and NFPA 5000 *The Building Construction and Safety Code*, would require fire sprinklers in all new nightclubs, bars, dancehalls, discotheques and similar assembly occupancies with capacities of 50 or more people. It would also require the retrofit of fire sprinklers in structures of similar occupancy with capacities of 100 or more.

This action came only a day after the state of Rhode Island passed similar requirements to sprinkler these types of occupancies with capacities of 150 or more people – this in response, of course, to the tragic fire at the Station nightclub on February 20, 2003 in West Warwick, Rhode Island in which 100 people lost their lives.

When asked about the outcome of the meeting, NFSA's Manager of Codes, Kevin Kelly, who is a member of the Assembly Committee said, "The fire protection industry has sent a very strong message to require fire sprinklers to prevent future tragedies such as the one at the Station nightclub." NFSA staff members Bob Treiber, who is also a member of the Assembly Committee, and Richard Skinner, Northeast Regional Manager, also supported the effort. Their experience and background on code issues and details of the Station nightclub fire were an invaluable asset in providing relevant information to members of the committee.

Additional information on this important development will be posted at the NFSA website at www.nfsa.org as soon as it becomes available.

Established in 1905, the National Fire Sprinkler Association is a trade association comprised of installers and manufacturers of fire sprinklers and related equipment and services. Professional and Subscriber memberships are also available. NFSA provides publications, seminars, representation in codes and standards-making, market development, labor relations, and other services to its membership. Headquartered in Patterson, New York, NFSA has regional offices throughout the country.

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