

THE FIRE LINE

April 11, 2014

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BUYER BEWARE!

So you are all aware our legislature, backed by a very strong Homebuilders Association, is trying to eliminate the requirement for specialty contractors, such as us. They are moving to allow damn near anyone to install fire protection systems! The following is correspondence I sent to our legislature after being asked to do so, regarding State House Bill 186. To say the least many Contractors and Building Officials are furious over this proposal, of which I think passed. Plan on seeing more Fire Officials enforcing the rules! Good for our industry if they do enforce the code, bad for the poor unsuspecting homeowner.

Kind sir,

With all due respect, your proposal to assume plumbers are qualified to install water based fire sprinkler systems leaves much to be desired.

As stated in your bill, on lines 181- 183, a " Journeyman plumber" means a person licensed under this chapter as a journeyman plumber having the qualifications, training, experience, and technical knowledge to engage in the plumbing trade. Furthermore, as stated on lines 200-203, you clearly state what the plumbing trade means, of which water based fire protection is not one of them.

A journeyman plumber is not qualified, in my opinion, to install, repair or replace water-base fire protection systems as noted on lines 760-762. They do not have the expertise that is required of our highly specifically trained pipe fitters to provide life safety systems, such as these. Our fitters, in many states, are required to be tested and certified in fire protection to even work on a fire system, if caught they can even be imprisoned.

Everyone, without educated and actual knowledge of our trade, does not understand the complexities and responsibly associated with fire protection and the lives at stake, if done wrong. The public's perception is totally wrong when it comes to the reality of our industry.

In over 40 years of providing these type of systems, I cannot think of a water based fire system put in by a plumber that was installed correctly. We have repaired an or replaced hundreds of potentially life threatening mistakes made by plumbers on illegally installed and repaired systems.

NFPA 13 is only one of many NFPA standards that govern water based sprinkler systems. This standard alone is over 400 pages and requires years of education and training to understand and apply the required principles of fire protection. When one adds the other standards affecting fire protection, such as 13D,13R,14,15,20,22,24, etc., please tell me how two years of experience qualifies one to provide life safety systems that must work when needed!

One thing for sure is, if your bill goes thru, as proposed with respect to fire protection qualifications, the fire departments and insurance companies will be very busy chasing incompetent installers who have installed subpar systems and, heaven forbid, cleaning up lives and property after fires. Where will you be?

Fire Marshals and AHJs cannot catch every code violation and frankly are not trained to do so. The sad fact about the fire protection industry is the standards for construction are one of the highest in nature, yet monitored by understaffed and less than knowledgeable individuals, some even volunteers. Going forward with your proposal to allow plumbers to perform this technical work will only ensure more degradation and place lives at risk.

This state is very weak on the enforcement of fire protection and should not be burdened further with less than competent people installing these misunderstood systems.

I have been in exams to become a qualified individual in many states throughout this country of which some have taken over 4 hours each, some even closed book! I would challenge any plumber to get higher than 30% on the technical aspects of the fire protection trade requirements. Installing urinals, water-closets, drains, etc. is a far cry from installing 2000 gpm pumps, million gallon water tanks, ½" to 8" overhead systems to name a few.

I sleep well at night because my company, along with many of my competitors, hold ourselves to the highest standards when it comes to life safety AND THE FIRE SYSTEMS WE DESIGN, FABRICATE AND INSTALL.

I would hope you will get it right and remove plumbers as qualified to do fire protection and sleep well at night, as well, knowing you got it right and saved lives.

After all that is what it is about isn't it?

Kent Mann

SAFETY FIRST

Falls are the number one killer in construction, and each year the number keeps rising.

In the United States, 1,224 construction workers were killed on the job in 2012. More than a third (441 or 36%) was killed in falls. Of these 40% (178) fell off a roof and 30.5% fell from ladders. In these two categories fatalities increased almost 29%. Most of the deadly falls were from scaffolding and lifts. Every year falls also produce a large number of crippling injuries.

Both laborers and their employees have responsibilities when it comes to fall protection. To reverse this rising trend everyone must take greater precautions.

Here are 10 tips on preventing falls while on the job.

- ❖ Understand the company's written fall prevention plan.
- ❖ Attend and participate in fall prevention training.
- ❖ Use fall protection equipment, if required, for the job. Be sure the equipment is right for the task, fits properly and is in good condition.
- ❖ Inspect all fall protection equipment and devices before each use.
- ❖ Make sure that floor holes, open shafts and riser penetrations are protected by sturdy guardrails and covers.
- ❖ Get specialized training before working on scaffolds, lifts or ladders.
- ❖ When using scaffolds, make sure there is proper access, full planking, stable footing and guard railing.
- ❖ Keep your feet firmly on the platform on a boom lift and tie-off at all times.
- ❖ Chose the correct ladder for the task, read the instructions and be sure that the ladder is in good condition. Check for surrounding hazards, stable footing and the proper angle.
- ❖ Contact your supervisor if you see fall hazards or have any questions about fall prevention. DO NOT work until unsafe conditions have been corrected.

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Three Qualities That Make a Leader

The kind of guy who commands leadership is first of all the fellow who knows his business and knows it so well that exudes confidence.

Second, he has to be a thoroughly honest person, with himself and everyone else - not because some outside influence tells him, but because of an inner ethical sense that tells him right from wrong.

Finally, the natural leader must have a real appetite for accomplishment. He must have the ability to work hard for long periods of time without breaking down mentally or physically under stress.

FIRE ENGINEERING NEWS...

FIRE'S SUMMER BBQ!
Mark your calendar for
Friday, June 20th @ 2:30.

There will be fire sprinkler
head demonstrations, fire
extinguisher fun and a
beeping alarm panel!

New Employees

DESIGN

Afton Villanueva
Lyndon Bowles

SH Service

Sandi Lewis

SH Purchasing & Warehouse Coordinator

Dustin Rhoads

Employee Accomplishments

Kevin Campbell
Axel Robinson

FS Journeyman
FS Journeyman

Chad Cole
Justin Hawkins
Brent Wright

FS Apprentice
FS Apprentice
FS Apprentice

George Schroder
George Schroder

NICET Level 2
Fan Test Level 1