

Q. Why does my Fire Sprinkler System need to be tested?

A. The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Division of Codes & Standards enforces all building codes. The standards IBC (International Bldg Code) and IFC (International Fire Code) adapt the NFPA 25 standard as the maintenance rules for fire suppression systems. Your Local Authority Having Jurisdiction will follow up to ensure as a property owner or manager, you've done your due diligence. More importantly, regular inspection and testing by trained a Fire Inspector is performed to assess and mitigate potential fire- *and life*-safety hazards in buildings.

While many people look at the fire inspection process negatively, these inspections benefit the building/business owners, as well as those who use the building, by offering:

- **A safer working and living environment for employees and or residents**
- **A safer building for all occupants in general** (visitors, shoppers, clients, etc.).
- **A well-maintained building for improved resale value.** A history of inspection always makes a property more desirable to potential buyers. It's also commonplace for buyers to hire a company to inspect the building prior to purchase to identify potential hidden costs related to fire and life safety.
- **A possible reduction in insurance premiums.** Many insurance carriers give businesses premium reductions for properly inspected and maintained fire-protection systems.
- **Business and job security.** Did you know that up to 80% of all small businesses that experience a fire never reopen? Of the businesses that do reopen, many lose much of their customer base due to prolonged absence of production or service.

Q. What does my fire sprinkler system inspection involve?

A. For the most part, inspections of fire and life-safety systems follow straightforward, traditional procedures. These include:

- Coordinated scheduling of inspection between the service provider and building owner, manager or other appropriate person.
- Notifying system alarm monitoring company (if there is one) and any local fire or police dispatch (if necessary). Notification of fire or police may not be mandatory in your town and will depend on your local statutes. Check with your officials before your appointment.
- Building owner, property manager or other on-site contact should notify any tenants when the inspectors will be onsite and make sure they can provide access to any necessary areas.
- Performing the inspection in accordance with the requirements of NFPA Standard #25 titled "Inspection, Testing and Maintenance of Water Based Fire Protection Systems" which includes: walking through of all accessible areas of the building and performing a visual inspection to confirm proper sprinkler coverage. Checking that sprinkler heads are free of grease, dust, rust, etc. Conducting a full flow of the inspector's test valve to confirm operation of all the waterflow and tamper switch devices as well as inspecting gauges, valves, signal devices and the actual sprinkler operation*.
- We will provide the customer & code official with a copy of our inspection report. The customer is responsible for providing this report to the appropriate official or insurance representative when they arrive to perform inspection.
- After inspection, our Superintendent will review the inspection report and make a record of any deficiencies discovered during the inspection to review with the customer. A quote is provided explaining the scope of work needed to correct these deficiencies.

Q: How Often Does My Fire Sprinkler System Need To Be Inspected?

A: All fire sprinkler systems and backflow preventers are required to be inspected annually at a minimum. Some sites may be required to be inspected on a semi-annual, quarterly, or even a weekly basis. Check with your local code officials and insurance provider*

** Depending on your fire suppression system, you may have other items that require inspection and testing such as fire hydrants, fire pumps, backflow preventer devices, standpipes, etc.*

Q: What Is A Backflow Preventer and Why Does It Need To Be Certified?

A: A backflow preventer ensures liquid (often containing antifreeze and stagnant, sitting water in the line) in the system does not reverse direction under adverse conditions such as a drop in the pressure. In the case of fire protection, a fire backflow testing and inspection makes sure the liquid does not get pulled back through the pipes and end up in your domestic drinking water supply.

Q. What happens if my fire sprinkler heads are painted, damaged or out of date?

A. They will not function properly and need to be replaced per NFPA code.

Q. Will all my fire sprinklers go off during a fire?

A. Unlike what you see in the movies and on television, no. In most cases just a few sprinkler heads go off, which slows the fire down long enough to save lives and property.

Q: What Happens If I Don't Get My Fire Sprinkler System Inspected?

A. "Fire Sprinklers Save Lives" and must be maintained in proper working order. Inspection and testing to your fire sprinkler is meant to discover any issues with your system that may prevent it from functioning correctly when you need it most. Besides the risk of possibly losing life and property from a fire; failure to have your system inspected can lead to other repercussions such as:

- Pipes breaking and freezing due to diluted antifreeze or lack of antifreeze. This could cause a great deal of property damage to your building or home and everything inside of it.
- An improperly working backflow preventer could allow old, stagnant water that often contains antifreeze into your domestic water supply which feeds your tenants, family, and animals.
- Damaged, dirty, or painted over fire sprinkler heads may not open and disperse water.
- You will be subjected to violation notices, citations, and fines from your local code official, not to mention the inevitable legal action brought against you by tenants when they discover no fire safety inspections were performed.
- In the event of a fire, your insurance company may not cover damages when they discover the system has not been properly maintained and inspected.

SUMMARY OF MINIMUM INSPECTION, TESTING, AND MAINTENANCE
--

ITEM/EQUIPMENT	ACTIVITY	FREQUENCY	REFERENCE
Gauges (dry, pre-action & deluge)	Inspection	Weekly	<i>NFPA 25,2-2.4.2</i>
Gauges (wet)	Inspection	Monthly	<i>NFPA 25,2-2.4.1</i>
Backflow Preventer Device	Inspection/Test	Annually	<i>NFPA #25, 12.6.2</i>
Sprinkler alarm service	Inspection	Quarterly	<i>NFPA 25,2-2.6</i>
Fire Department Connections	Inspection	Quarterly	<i>NFPA 25, 9-7.1</i>
Buildings	Inspection	Annually (<i>prior to freezing weather</i>)	<i>NFPA 25,2-2.5</i>
Hanger/seismic bracing	Inspection	Annually	<i>NFPA 25,2-2.3</i>
Pipe and fittings	Inspection	Annually	<i>NFPA 25,2-2.2</i>
Sprinklers	Inspection	Annually	<i>NFPA 25,2-2.1.1</i>
Spare sprinkler heads	Inspection	Annually	<i>NFPA 25,2-2.1.3</i>
<u>Control Valves</u> Unlocked/sealed Locked Supervised	Inspection Inspection Inspection	Weekly Monthly Monthly	<i>NFPA 25, 9-3.3.1</i>
Fire Pumps	Inspection	Weekly	<i>NFPA 25,5-2 &5-3</i>
Fire Pumps	Inspection/Test	Annually	<i>NFPA 25,5-3.3.1</i>
Water flow/Alarm devices	Test	Quarterly	<i>NFPA 25,2-3.3</i>
Special protection systems	Test	Semi-Annually/Annually	<i>NFPA 12, 12A, 17, 17A & 2001</i>
Main drain (2" drain)	Test	Annually	<i>NFPA 25, Table 9-1</i>
<u>Control Valves</u> Position Operation Supervisory	Test Test Test	Annually Annually Semi-Annually	<i>NFPA 25, 9-3.4.1</i> <i>NFPA 25, 9-3.4.1</i> <i>NFPA 25, 9-3.4.3</i>
<u>Dry Pipe Valves</u> Priming water Low air pressure alarm Quick opening device Trip test Full flow trip test	Test Test Test Test Test	Quarterly Quarterly Quarterly Annually Every 3 years	<i>NFPA 25, 9-4.4.2.1</i> <i>NFPA 25, 9-4.4.2.6</i> <i>NFPA 25, 13.4.5.2.2.4</i> <i>NFPA 25, 13.4.5.2.2.2</i> <i>NFPA 25, 13.4.5.2.2</i> <i>NFPA 25, 13.4.5.2.2.2</i>

There are some items that require special testing every 3 or 5 years such as internal pipe obstruction testing or pressure testing. Most likely your local code officials will notify you when these items are due.

The information contained herein is not intended as a substitute for advice from a safety expert or legal counsel. The information provided in this document is not intended to replace any other legal responsibility you may have to provide a safe premises, workplace, product, or operation.

Please feel free to check with your local code enforcement official if you have any additional questions about NFPA 25 or to receive additional clarification about your responsibilities as a building owner, property manager or tenant.