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Society of Fire Protection Engineers

New Jersey Chapter

FUSIBLE LINK

MAY 2011

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President's Message...

Our Annual Technical Seminar was held at Newark Liberty Airport this past month and was very successful with 75 participants and 11 Vendors showing their products and services. We want to thank everyone who attended and those who presented for an outstanding event. Two more meetings are left in our Chapter year, May 2 and June 6 so don't miss out on our excellent program and dinner speakers. The June meeting is also our annual business meeting where we elect new officers and directors. An upgraded menu is also planned so don't be left out. Our Annual Golf Outing will again be held at West Point, NY on Monday June 27th. You can sign up on our chapter web site or with the form attached. As always the outing benefits our scholarship program. We typically have over 100 participants every year so you may want to sign up early. Thank you all for supporting the Chapter and programs this past year. I look forward to seeing all of you at the May meeting.

Rich Reitberger
Chapter President

<http://www.njsfpe.org/>

www.twitter.com/newjerseysfpe

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/pages/New-Jersey-Chapter-of-the-Society-of-Fire-Protection-Engineers-SFPE/230335010430?ref=search&sid=1603495530.128212107..1>

Attic Fires in Residential Buildings

These topical reports are designed to explore facets of the U.S. fire problem as depicted through data collected in the U.S. Fire Administration's (USFA's) National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS). Each topical report briefly addresses the nature of the specific fire or fire-related topic, highlights important findings from the data, and may suggest other resources to consider for further information. Also included are recent examples of fire incidents that demonstrate some of the issues addressed in the report or that put the report topic in context.

Findings

- An estimated 10,000 residential building attic fires are reported to U.S. fire departments each year and cause an estimated 30 deaths, 125 injuries, and \$477 million in property loss.
- Residential building attic fires are considered part of the residential fire problem and comprise approximately 2 percent of all residential building fires.
- Almost all residential building attic fires are nonconfined fires (99 percent).
- One- and two-family residential buildings account for 90 percent of residential attic fires.
- Electrical malfunction is the leading cause of residential building attic fires (43 percent), followed by natural fires (16 percent).
- A third of all residential building attic fires spread to involve the entire building. Only 2 percent extend beyond the building to adjacent properties.
- Residential building attic fires are most prevalent in December (12 percent) and January (11 percent) and peak between the hours of 4 and 8 p.m.
- Electrical arcing is the most common heat source in residential building attic fires (37 percent).

From 2006 to 2008, an estimated 10,000 residential building fires originating in attics were reported by U.S. fire departments annually. These fires caused an estimated 30 deaths, 125 injuries, and \$477 million dollars in property damage. Residential building attic fires are 2 percent of all residential building fires reported to the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) from 2006 to 2008. Attics are not commonly used as occupied spaces and, as a result, they usually do not have smoke alarms or heat sensors. When a fire occurs in an attic, it is common that it will go unnoticed until smoke or flames, escaping from the roof, are visible from the outside. Sometimes, however, enough smoke will reach the smoke alarms on the lower levels, setting them off. Because they can take longer to detect, attic fires are very dangerous for firefighters and residents alike. The delayed detection allows the fire to become larger in size, ultimately causing more damage. The attic provides the fire with an array of fuel sources like open wood support beams and storage items. In attic fires, multiple areas of the attic tend to be involved. The fire tends to spread amongst the wood fairly easily and can be concealed under the insulation. This makes it very important that firefighters perform a thorough check of the attic to ensure that no hotspots, embers, or smoldering debris are still present. The location of the attic provides many difficulties for firefighters when extinguishing the fire. Careful planning goes into deciding the best way to extinguish an attic fire. Firefighters must decide whether to fight the fire from above or below, both of which present many difficulties. In both instances, firefighters have to consider that roofs or ceilings may collapse. The large

amounts of water used to extinguish the blaze causes the insulation and wood beams to become saturated. Firefighters have been known to fall through the roof into the attic or through the attic into the floor(s) below. In addition, not all attics have flooring. If firefighters enter the attic, they must be careful not to step outside the flooring area since they risk falling through the ceiling. The construction of the attic is another area that presents difficulties to firefighters. Older and newer homes are constructed using different techniques. Older homes tend to have roofs that are framed with larger sized lumber, 2 by 6 inches. These attics usually provide a continuous attic space with a peak as high as 8 feet. Conventional attics are not generally compartmentalized like many new home attics. Newer home attics typically employ a truss-framed construction that involves smaller wood boards placed in "A" (or triangular) shapes throughout the attic from the ceiling to the floor. This construction can be difficult for a firefighter to navigate. In addition, wood members in truss-framed construction can conceal fires and make extinguishing the fire more difficult. In large new homes and multifamily dwellings, many attics are constructed with fire stops, which can be as substantial as 2-hour, fire-resistance rated walls. These help limit the spread of the fire from the attic to surrounding areas.

Because attic fires pose unique challenges, this topical report addresses the characteristics of residential building attic fires as reported to NFIRS from 2006 to 2008. The NFIRS data are used for the analyses presented throughout the report. For the purpose of the report, the terms "residential fires" and "attic fires" are synonymous with "residential building

fires” and “residential building attic fires,” respectively. “Attic fires” is used throughout the body of this report; the findings, tables, charts, headings, and footnotes reflect the full category, “residential building attic fires.”

Type of Fire

Building fires are divided into two classes of severity in NFIRS: “Confined fires,” which are those fires confined to certain types of equipment or objects, and “non-confined

fires,” which are not. Confined building fires are small fire incidents that are limited in extent, staying within pots or fireplaces or certain other noncombustible containers. Confined fires rarely result in serious injury or large content losses, and are expected to have no significant accompanying property losses due to flame damage. Non-confined fires account for nearly all attic fires (Table 1). Because there are so few confined attic fires (less than 1 percent), the subsequent analyses in this report include all attic fires and do not distinguish between confined and non-confined fires.

Table 1. Residential Building Attic Fires by Type of Incident (2006-2008)

Incident Type	Percent
Nonconfined fires	99.2
Building fires	97.3
Fires in structures other than a building	1.1
Fires in mobile homes and other mobile/portable buildings	0.8
Confined fires	0.8
Chimney or flue fire, confined to chimney or flue	0.6
Fuel burner/boiler malfunction	0.1
Trash or rubbish fire, contained	0.1
Total	100.0

Source: NFIRS 5.0

Note: Total may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Type of Property

Residential buildings are divided into three major property types: one- and two-family buildings, multi-family buildings, and other. One- and two-family residential buildings include detached single-family residences, manufactured homes, mobile homes not in transit, and duplexes. Multifamily residential buildings include apartments, condos, and town houses. Other residential buildings include all other types of residential buildings, such as hotels or motels, long-term care facilities, dormitories, and sorority or fraternity housing.

One- and two-family residential buildings account for nearly all (90 percent) of residential attic fires reported to NFIRS. By comparison, one- and two-family residential buildings account for 65 percent of fires originating in other, non-attic areas of residential buildings, more in line with the occurrence of one- and two-family residential building fires overall (66 percent).

When Residential Building Attic Fires Occur

Attic fires occur most frequently in the late afternoon to early evening hours, peaking from 4 to 8 p.m. They gradually decline throughout the late evening and early morning hours. The lowest point is reached between 4 and 6 a.m. The fire incidences then begin to rise gradually until 7 a.m. where a small peak is observed. A small decrease is seen from 8 to 10

a.m. Beginning at 10 a.m., the number of fire incidences start to increase until the peak hours are reached. The peak period (4 to 8 p.m.) accounts for 23 percent of attic fires.

Attic fires peak twice during the year, once in the colder months and again in the summer. The cold weather peak, which is the highest peak, occurs during the months of December (12 percent) and January (11 percent). The increase in attic fires during these 2 months is partially a result of electrical malfunction fires. The second peak in attic fires is seen during the months of June (9 percent) and July (10 percent). This summer peak is primarily a result of natural fires, which are highest during these 2 months. The majority of these natural fires are the result of lightning discharge. The lowest number of fire incidents is seen in September which sees the least number of attic fires caused by electrical malfunctions.

Causes of Residential Building Attic Fires

Forty-three percent of all attic fires are electrical malfunction fires. This finding suggests that homeowners and residents should make it a priority to have electrical equipment and electrical wiring in the attic inspected and properly maintained.

The next four leading causes combined account for 40 percent of attic fires: natural fires (16 percent), open flame fires (10 percent), other unintentional, careless fires (8 percent), and other heat fires (6 percent).¹⁸

How Residential Building Attic Fires Start (Heat Source)

The “heat from powered equipment” category, predominately electrical distribution-related equipment, accounts for 54 percent of all attic fires. Within this category, electrical arcing accounts for 37 percent, radiated or conducted heat from operating equipment accounts for 8 percent, heat from other powered equipment accounts for 6 percent, and sparks, embers, or flames from operating equipment account for 3 percent of all attic fires. The “hot or smoldering objects” category accounts for 18 percent of attic fires. This category includes fires started by miscellaneous hot or smoldering objects (8 percent) and hot embers or ashes (8 percent). The third largest category “chemical, natural heat sources” (14 percent) is primarily lightning discharge (13 percent).

Overall, smoke alarms were present in 50 percent of attic fires and were known to have operated in 20 percent of the fires. By comparison, smoke alarms were present in 43 percent of non-confined, non-attic residential fires and operated in 24 percent. In 23 percent of attic fires, there were no smoke alarms present. In another 27 percent of these fires, firefighters were unable to determine if a smoke alarm was present.

There is a contradiction between firefighters’ experiences in attic fires and what the NFIRS data suggest. Firefighters,

both in published media and in interviews for this report, note that smoke alarms are generally not in the attic area itself but are most often on the ceiling of the story below the attic. Smoke and heat rise; if the alarm is activated, it is often because of smoke seepage from the attic opening. Hence, if smoke alarms operate, they are generally late in the detection and notification of attic fires. The data, however, suggest that a *larger* proportion of smoke alarms are present in attic fires than in other residential fires, contrary to experience. Yet, consistent with experience, is that a smaller proportion of the alarms operate and that the overall damage is higher. While veteran firefighters note that a smoke alarm present in the occupied area beneath an attic may detect smoke seeping into the occupied space and may provide adequate warning time to *escape* the fire, it is not adequate for the early fire *detection* smoke alarms afford. Few, if any, smoke alarms are Underwriters Laboratories (UL)-listed for use in the temperature extremes an attic can experience. Few, if any, codes require alarms in one- and two- family residential attics where nearly all (90 percent) of attic fires occur. As a result, very few attics have smoke alarms installed.

Automatic Extinguishment System Data

Overall, full or partial automatic extinguishing systems (AESS), mainly sprinklers, were present in just 1 percent of attic fires. The lack of suppression equipment (sprinklers) in attic properties is not unexpected as sprinklers are largely absent nationwide in residential buildings. As well, none of the of the national model codes require sprinklers in attics in one- and two-family residences, the location of 90 percent of attic fires reported to NFIRS.

2011-2012 New Jersey SFPE Nomination for Officers and Directors

In compliance with the Nomination Section of the Constitution and By-Laws of the New Jersey Chapter of the Society of Fire Protection Engineers, the Nominating Committee submits the following slate of Officers and Directors. The election will be conducted at the Annual Business Meeting, scheduled for Monday, June 6, 2011 at the Hanover Manor.

President	Ed Armm
First VP	John Cholin
Second VP	Joe Janiga
Secretary	David Gluckman
Asst. Secretary	Brad Hart
Treasurer	Bob Murray
Asst. Treasurer	Glenn Buser
Board of Directors (2-year term)	Chandra Patel (first year of first term)
	Nathan Gorey (first year of first term)
	Paul McGrath (first year of first term)

Chapter member Dave Kurasz is are also running for the first year of his second term as Board of Directors member-at-large.

Rich Reitberger will be Immediate Past President, a voting member of the Board of Directors and Chair of the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee and the Board of Directors welcomes volunteers to serve in leadership capacities within the organization including Committee activities and the Board itself. No other members made their interests and willingness to serve known to the Nominating Committee prior to this report. Any member with a desire to run as a candidate for Chapter Officer or Director is encouraged to do so. They must contact the Chapter Secretary, Joe Janiga (973-541-6774) at least four weeks prior to the Annual Business Meeting. In accordance with the New Jersey Chapter By-Laws, candidates must submit the signatures of five voting members of the New Jersey Chapter SFPE along with their letter of intention to run for any of the above positions. According to the calendar, the deadline is Friday, May 6, 2011.



For Immediate Release
Contact: Tim Davis
Fire Protection Systems Corrosion Management, Inc.
314-432-1377
tdavis@fpscmi.com

Engineered Corrosion Solutions announces a pre-engineered nitrogen generation system for dry and preaction fire sprinkler systems.

Saint Louis, MO, October 26, 2010 Fire Protection Systems Corrosion Management, Inc. (fpsCMI) the preeminent provider of nitrogen generators for fire protection systems is proud to announce the [Engineered Corrosion Solutions Pre-Engineered Nitrogen Generation System \(PENGS\)](#). The PENGS is a pre-engineered nitrogen generation system that is designed to purge oxygen from pressure maintenance gas in a single zone dry or preaction fire sprinkler system with a capacity up to 750 gallons.

According to Thorstein Holt President of Holtec Gas Systems and fpsCMI's joint venture partner for nitrogen applications, "This changes everything. The ECS Pre-Engineered Nitrogen Generation System is a self contained skid-mounted unit complete with nitrogen generator, compressor, vent and air maintenance device. It is truly a plug and play system that is plumbed directly to the fire sprinkler zone and does not require on-site commissioning."

A unique feature of the patent pending PENGS is the unit's ability to provide automatic "fill and purge" breathing to remove virtually all of the oxygen from the fire sprinkler system piping network. After a period of time of typically up to two weeks, the fire sprinkler system piping will be completely inerted with dry nitrogen gas at which point oxygen corrosion is completely controlled. Thereafter, the PENGS is programmed to stop the "fill and purge" process but continues to automatically provide nitrogen gas on an as-needed basis that is sufficient for pressure maintenance of the fire sprinkler system.

The [Engineered Corrosion Solutions Pre-Engineered Nitrogen Generation System](#) can service a single dry/preaction system whose total volume is less than 750 gallons and runs on an 110v AC power supply. The self-contained unit reduces contractor's installation labor and eliminates commissioning cost when compared to alternatives. The PENGS is an ideal application for dry/preaction fire sprinkler systems protecting small outdoor canopies, loading docks, small data centers, museums, and attic systems.

Fire Protection Systems Corrosion Management Inc. is the industry leader in providing corrosion assessment, mitigation and prevention technology to the fire protection industry. fpsCMI responds to project and industry needs with a team of professionals including registered fire protection engineers and graduate chemists who possesses a complete understanding of the science and mechanisms that causes internal corrosion.

The fpsCMI team brings decades of experience in addressing internal corrosion in fire sprinkler systems and therefore consistently delivers solutions and products that are unique state-of-the-art technologies.

Additional information about fpsCMI can be found at <http://www.fpscmi.com> or by calling 877-432-8040.

#

Society of Fire Protection Engineers New York Metro & New Jersey Chapters



Annual Golf Outing
Monday June 27, 2011
West Point Golf Course
West Point, NY
845-938-2435

For the Benefit of the Joint Scholarship Fund

Outing Highlights Include:

- Limited Openings to the First 144 Player Reservations – No Exceptions
- Early AM Continental Breakfast & Registration – 8:30AM Shotgun Start
- Greens Fees & Cart Included – Four Player Scramble Format
- BBQ Buffet following Play – Performance & Door Prizes

\$125.00 per Player / \$ 50.00 to Attend Luncheon Only
(\$140.00 Player Fee if Payment received after June 12th)

Make checks Payable to “NJ Chapter SFPE”

COMPLETE, DETACH & SUBMIT PORTION BELOW

	NAME	COMPANY	PHONE OR EMAIL
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CART 2			
CART 3			
CART 4			

AMOUNT ENCLOSED - \$ _____ GROUP CONTACT: _____

CONTACT PHONE: _____

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Society of Fire Protection Engineers New York Metro & New Jersey Chapters



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Return this portion with your payment to: NY Metro/NJ SFPE Golf Outing

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973-541-6771

Firewater Tank Collapse Kills 2 Fire Protection Engineers

USA – Investigators from three agencies were at the scene Friday of an industrial accident in Lake Placid where two men died Thursday afternoon after a 300,000-gallon water tank burst causing the building they worked in to collapse.



The accident happened at about 2 p.m. Thursday at the former Georgia Pacific plant, located at 400 State Road 70, said sheriff's spokeswoman Nell Hays. The Highlands County Sheriff's Office, the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Florida Department of Environmental Protection were each investigating.

Jon Martinez and Jason Steele, who both worked for United Fire Protection in St. Petersburg, were reportedly fixing a pump inside a concrete block building, adjacent to the water tank when it ripped apart, authorities said.

When the tank burst, it released a rush of water that caused the building to collapse, trapping the victims inside, authorities added. It was previously reported by some news agencies that the pumps in the pump house building were used to fill the water tank.

However, Highlands County Fire Operations Supervisor Jimmy Branca said Thursday, in his opinion these pumps were designed to pull water from the water tank for the fire suppression systems to the 200,000-square-foot former plant.

The water tank was filled elsewhere from a well, he said. James Harris, Highlands County Fire Services supervisor, said the building had been vacant for a while. "Before it could be leased the fire protection system had to be checked out," Harris said. "They needed to replace the pump." The pump house had two pumps, which was a requirement by Georgia Pacific, but one was torn out to see if it could be rebuilt, and the one they were replacing was going to be the primary and only pump, Harris added.

Inspection records on the tank are with Georgia Pacific, Harris said. Those are usually done by the sprinkler system contractors, but while the county inspects their records, it does not keep copies, he said. An attorney for the owner of the property, Leo Brusco, said the property had been purchased in October and they were getting ready to put it up for lease.

Society of Fire Protection Engineers New York Metro & New Jersey Chapters



Society of Fire Protection Engineers



Location:

West Point Golf Course
Building 1230
West Point, NY 10996
845-938-2435

Directions:

Palisades Parkway North to the Bear Mountain Bridge Traffic Circle. Go three quarters of the way around the circle and take 9W toward West Point. Go 5.5 miles and take the Rte. 218 / Rte. 293 / Rte. 6 exit. (Note: You will go under a golf cart bridge just before the exit.) You can see the golf course on the right off of 9W. Exit right off the ramp into the parking lot.

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MEETING NOTICE

- Date:** May 2, 2011
- Place:** Hanover Manor
16 Eagle Rock Avenue
East Hanover, NJ
- Price:** \$30.00
- Dinner:** 5:00-6:00 (Cash bar for mixed drinks)
Dinner at 6 PM
- Topic:** An update on the use of elevators for high-rise egress” - Tim Costello, PE Rolf Jensen & Associates, Inc. Tim Costello of RJAHH will update us the new regulations for the use of elevators for high-rise egress. This will require changes in the way we, as Fire Protection Engineers, Fire Alarm Company Sales and Engineering Staffs, Technicians, etc., provide programming and evacuation plans.

Please note for this meeting:

All officers, directors and committee chairman are requested to attend a meeting at 4:00 p.m. at the Hanover Manor.

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN WITH YOUR CHECK PAYABLE TO “SFPE NJ CHAPTER” TO:

Vicki Serafin
Affiliated FM
400 Interpace Parkway, Bldg C - 3rd Floor
Parsippany, NJ 07054-1196
vicki.serafin@affiliatedfm.com

OR PAY AT THE DOOR

NAME: _____

COMPANY: _____ TELEPHONE: _____

Meeting Dates/Programs 2010-2011

May 2	An update on the use of elevators for high-rise egress” - Tim Costello, PE Rolf Jensen & Associates, Inc.
June 6	Annual Meeting—Update on HVLS fan testing - Pete Wilse, XL

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HELPFUL LINKS

ADAAG <http://www.access-board.gov/adaag/about/index.htm>

AFAA National <http://www.affaa.org/>

AFFSA <http://www.firesprinkler.org/>

ANSI <http://web.ansi.org/>

ASHRAE <http://www.ashrae.org/>

Campus-Firewatch <http://www.campus-firewatch.com/>

Coffee Break Training <http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/nfa/coffee-break/>

CPSC <http://www.cpsc.gov/>

CSAA <http://www.csaaul.org/>

Municipal Codes (E Codes) <http://www.generalcode.com/Webcode2.html>

FDNY <http://nyc.gov/html/fdny/html/home2.shtml>

FM Global <http://www.fmglobal.com/>

FSDANY <http://www.fsdany.org/regs.htm>

FSI <http://www.firesprinklerinitiative.org/>

FSSA <http://www.fssa.net/>

Fire Tech Productions—Nicet Training (FTP) <http://www.firetech.com/>

Home Fire Spklr Coalition <http://www.homefiresprinkler.org/>

HVAC Bld. Control Fire Safety <http://www.iklimnet.com/hotelfires/hotelfiresmain.html>

AFAA-NJ <http://www.affaanj.org/>

International Code Council - <http://www.iccsafe.org/>

International Code Council Residential Sprinkler Exam - http://www.iccsafe.org/news/nr/2009/0709_ResidentialSprinklerExam.pdf

The Joint Commission (JCAHO) - <http://www.jointcommission.org/www.JointCommission.org/>

Material safety data Sheets (MSDS-OSHA Site) - <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/hazardcommunications/index.html>

National of Fire Equipment Distributors (NAFED) - <http://www.nafed.org/index.cfm>

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Do you want your business to be known by over 125 professionals in the local Fire Protection industry? Advertise in the Fusible Link. \$100 per chapter fiscal year. Contact Vicki Serafin for more info: Vicki.serafin@affiliatedfm.com