

Standard Operating Guidelines
FIRE INSPECTION TRAINING MANUAL

Code Enforcement Chart

INITIAL INSPECTION

1. No Violations – Complete and document file
2. Violations – (14-30 day notice or less- re-inspection- abate- file)

Normal re-inspections are on a 30-day cycle. Certain types of Inspections may have re-inspection dates less than 30 days such as the following:

- Blocked Exits – **IMMEDIATE**
- Disabled Fire Alarms – **IMMEDIATE**
- Broken Fire Alarms – 24 hours
- Unsafe Conditions – Inspectors Judgment
- Hazardous Conditions – Inspectors Judgment

RE-INSPECTION

1. Violations Abated – complete and document the file and return to Bureau
2. Appeal - Appeal- The Appeal must be filed with the County Construction Board of Appeals within 15 days. The exception to this is a case of Imminent Hazards; hearing shall be within 24 hours.
3. Variance- Variance from the requirement of a regulation or standard must be made in writing to the Fire official and may be granted if determined strict compliance would result in practical difficulty and would not jeopardize the safety of the occupants, firefighters or the public.
4. Extension of Time -30 days or less per extension – re-inspections 30 to 90 days increments. Re-Inspection and extension cycle will vary on each Inspection. Average number of Re-Inspections is (3) three. Some Inspections may carry violations over year-to-year depending on circumstance and Subchapter 4 provisions. Unabated violation requiring extensions must be document on the appropriate form.
5. Violations Unabated- (Order to Pay Penalty & Abate Violations & Recurring violations- Injunction Relief- Unsafe Structure- Imminent Hazard-Punitive Closing Order)

PENALTIES

1. Collection – Violation Abated – document and file
2. Collection – Violation Unabated – dedicated and compensatory penalty- summary proceedings- waiver- injunction relief- fire department recovery cost
 - If the penalty is paid but violations are not corrected, the Bureau would refer the case to its attorney for Injunctive Relief. This process involves a Superior Court action on an order to show cause. The judge may order compliance by Court Order, modify the violation schedule, remand the case to the local Board of Appeals, or vacate the order as he sees fit. A Superior Court action may be appealed to higher courts as any other legal action may.
3. Non Collection – Violation Abated- summary proceedings- court
4. Non Collection – Violation Unabated --dedicated and compensated penalty- summary proceedings- injunction relief- imminent hazard- unsafe structure- punitive closing- fire department recovery cost

Fire Department Cost Recovery: Once under violation, the owner may be liable for the cost of Firefighting operations if violations are not abated. The Fire Chief shall certify these costs to the Fire Official. Once collected these funds shall be returned to the Fire Department to defray the costs incurred.

These are the basic steps used in enforcement of the Uniform Fire Safety Code and may be applied singularly or several actions at once. All penalties are to be paid to the enforcing agency within 30 days or they may be sued in Supreme Court by summary proceedings.

Penalties (NJAC 5:70-2.12)

If a penalty is issued by the Fire Official, several avenues of enforcement are created. The Bureau recommendations are as follows:

- 1st offense – 10% of maximum allowable fine
- 2nd offense – 50% of maximum allowable fine
- 3rd offense – 100% of maximum allowable fine
- 4th offense – continuing penalty
- 5th offense – daily penalty
- 6th offense – punitive closing

All penalties are issued by the Fire Official and may only be vacated after Violation Abatement. Fire Bureau S.O.P. is to enforce the initial penalty if more than one penalty has been issued. Continuing, daily, and punitive closings are issued at the discretion of the Fire Official. Please be aware that other enforcement tactics may be employed in conjunction with penalties.

Dedicated Penalty (NJAC 5:70-2.12A)

Whenever any penalty is assessed, then a Dedicated Penalty in like amount shall be assessed. Dedicated penalties shall be assessed once and shall not be assessed each day, as may be done in penalty assessment (NJAC 5:70-2.12).

Compensatory Penalties (NJAC 5:70-2.13)

An owner who has been given a violation shall be responsible for fire suppressions if the fire directly or indirectly results from the violation, whichever is greater.

Variance (NJAC 5:70-2:14)

Variance from the requirement of a regulation or standard must be made in writing to the Fire official and may be granted if determined strict compliance would result in practical difficulty and would not jeopardize the safety of the occupants, firefighters or the public.

Injunctive Relief (NJAC 5:70-2:15)

Violation unabated- injunction relief- petition Superior Court

If the penalty is paid but violations are not corrected, the Bureau would refer the case to its attorney for Injunctive Relief. This process involves a Superior Court action on an order to show cause. The judge may order compliance by Court Order, modify the violation schedule, remand the case to the local Board of Appeals, or vacate the order as he sees fit. A Superior Court action may be appealed to higher courts as any other legal action may.

Imminent Hazard ((NJAC 5:70-2.16)

Re-inspect- violation unabated – imminent hazard order -vacate /close/ remove
Hearing within 24 hours- unsafe structure order-punitive closing

Only the Fire Official will order an Imminent Hazard if deemed necessary. Imminent Hazard Order definition “ready to take place” or “hanging threatening over ones head.” An Imminent Hazard is a difficult problem to access and relies on the ability of Fire Inspectors to identify the amount of risk to the occupant. The capability of the building and its Fire Protection systems to provide life safety, and the redundant fire safety systems available to assure safety in case of any single system failure. The Inspector must rely on experience, knowledge of fire hazards and fire protection systems, and overall behavior of a building should a fire erupt within it.

The code requires the Inspector to consider the danger to the occupant, intended occupant, and Firefighters. The order shall be in writing to the owner of the building, shall state the nature of the violations, and shall state the date and hour by which the building shall be vacated or violations removed. Re-Inspection shall occur within 48 hours of written notice from the owner that the violations have been abated.

Evacuation of Unsafe Structure (NJAC 5:70-2.17)

Imminent hazard- violation unabated- unsafe structure order- time to correct violation or
evacuate property immediately- Punitive closing.

The criteria of Unsafe Structures are as follows:

1. Opinion of the Fire Official that an actual or potential problem exists
2. Danger to occupants or those in proximity of the building because of:
 - i. Unsafe structural condition
 - ii. Inadequacy of any means of egress
 - iii. Presence of explosives, explosive fumes, or vapors
 - iv. Presence of toxic gases or materials

Evacuation may be ordered, occupants shall be immediately notified to leave building, occupants shall not enter or re-enter the building until directed to do so by the Fire Official

Punitive Closing (NJAC 5:70-2.18)

Imminent hazard- violation unabated- unsafe structure order- time to correct violation or evacuate property immediately. A violation that is willful or grossly negligent or violates previous issued orders and constitutes danger to human life shall be closed until abated or a CCO is issued to the owner pursuant to the UCC.

KEY INSPECTION POINTS: PROFESSIONALISM

A. APPEARANCE:

1. Neat Hair
2. Clean Uniform
3. Fresh Breath
4. All Reports Needed in Metal Folder
5. Clean Vehicle
6. All Tools Needed to Complete the Job

B. APPROACH:

Professionalism = Polite, Courteous, Friendly, Patience, Controlled

1. Allow people to display emotion
2. Listen empathetically
3. Avoid intimidation and threats
4. Be careful of inflammatory, confusing, and abstract language
5. Try to create “win-win” situations
6. Keep the discussion on a professional level
7. Do not berate, brow-beat, or be abusive to people
8. Watch the tone of your voice
9. Stay focused on the problem
10. Treat the person the way you would like to be treated!!

REMEMBER: BAD IMPRESSIONS ARE DIFFICULT TO UNDO AND CREATE UNNEEDED PRESSURE ON THE FIRE SAFETY BUREAU – YOU CAN BE A NICE GUY AND STILL ENFORCE THE FIRE CODE.

C. INSPECTION TOUR:

1. Take your time – Public safety is not served if you hurry
2. Keep your mind on the job at hand
3. Be thorough in your inspection – The violation you detect may save a life
4. Inspect from top, down – Keep a logical order to your notes
5. Use shopping lists to prompt you to examine things
6. Prioritize and categorize your violations

D. CLOSING INTERVIEW:

1. Remember all of the rules on professionalism
2. Review any test reports available
3. Verify all information on owner, address, telephones etc.
4. Discuss only the major violations and explain that the minor ones will also be identified on the report
5. Explain extension procedures and appeals procedures
6. Leave a business card

REMEMBER THAT THE WORK YOU DO IS A REFLECTION OF YOU, YOUR DEPARTMENT, AND THE DISTRICT! WE EXPECT YOU TO DO THE WORK PROPERLY, WITH CARE, AND RIGHT, THE FIRST TIME!

REPORTS:

- A. Organized to pattern of inspection tour
- B. Organized to inspection violation group
- C. Organized to building locations
- D. Organized by combination

CLEAR STATEMENTS:

Action – Violation – Location – Code Cite

Include code section reprint only if necessary

CLEAR WORDING:

Stay away from technical jargon if possible

Example: Use exit instead of means of egress

Use smoke detector instead of smoke sensing device

Use sprinklers instead of automatic fire suppression systems

Clear wording will enhance the laypersons ability to figure out what is to be done.

CLEAR LOCATIONS:

Try to identify violations with proper location and landmarks. Use the Room # or name of the occupant or owners rep would use to identify the space.

BE CONCISE:

Do not write more than you have to nor less than you have to.

KEY INSPECTION POINTS: ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS

1. Service Panel, are conductors broken, chafed, or frayed?
2. Is the Panel Box excessively warm?
3. What is the rating of the service, 30AMP, 60AMP, 100AMP?
4. Do the fuses seem to be proper size: 15AMP light circuits, 20AMP small appliance circuits, 30AMP major appliance circuits, 50AMP electric ranges, 30-40AMPS for air conditioners
5. What type of wire is present; Romex, BX, Conduit, Wire Mold
6. Do the visible connections appear tight fitting or loose?
7. Are the Work or Junction Boxes properly sealed and have proper fittings?
8. Is the wire properly protected from mechanical damage?
9. Is the wire and boxes properly secured and supported?
10. Are the outlets and switches properly covered?
11. Are the outlets or switches damaged?
12. Are the outlets overloaded using non-U.L. listed devices?
13. Is there abusive use of extension cords, (extension cords should not be used in place of permanent wiring)!
14. Are extension cords stapled, bent, frayed, or subject to mechanical damage?
15. Are the extension cords undersized for the equipment being used?
16. 18 AWG (Zip Cord) is rated for 7 AMP loads; a toaster rated at 1200 watts will draw a load of 10 amps. The difference in amps will create heat due to resistance.
17. Do the extension or other cords run under carpets?
18. Are the extension cords being used to power emergency equipment?
19. Do I need to refer these violations to the Electrical Sub code?

OMH'S LAW: VOLTS X AMPS = WATTS, WATTS/VOLTS = AMPS

VOLT = PRESSURE, AMPS = RESISTANCE, WATTS = RATE OF FLOW

KEY INSPECTION POINTS: HEATING SYSTEMS

- A. Type of Heater; gas, electric, solid fuel
- B. Does the heater have adequate clearance to combustible materials?
- C. What is the total input rating of the heater?
- D. What are the minimum clearances on side, top, rear, front, bottom?
- E. Does the equipment appear to be functioning properly?
- F. On gas heaters check the draft cap; is there excessive heat, or blow back of air?
- G. Is the vent of proper size and construction?
- H. Is the vent pipe properly pitched?
- I. Is the vent pipe properly secured and sealed?
- J. Is the vent pipe too close to combustible constructions?
- K. If the vent pipe penetrates combustible construction, is it properly fire stopped to combustibles?
- L. Does the chimney appear to be sound and clear?
- M. Are there drip tees on the gas lines for condensation collection?
- N. Are the electrical connections made properly and secure in proper boxes?
- O. Are all of the required safety covers installed on the equipment?
- P. Are the fan belts in good shape on forced air heaters?
- Q. Is the area free of flammable liquids?
- R. Does the appliance use inside or outside combustion air?
- S. Is the combustion air adequate for the appliances installed?
- T. Are the emergency fuel shut off switches in the proper locations?
- U. Are they properly marked and identified?
- V. Do they work?
- W. Is the outside chimney sound, is it pointed, is it the proper height?
- X. Is the chimney inside, is the rated shaft properly designed?
- Y. On electric heaters, are combustible clearances maintained?
- Z. Are electrical heaters on their own circuit; is it of the proper size?

KEY INSPECTION POINTS: STORAGE

- A. What type of storage is present?
- B. Is storage neat or disorderly in arrangement?
- C. What types of ignition sources are present?
- D. Are aisle spaces adequate for firefighting purposes?
- E. Are storage piles stable?
- F. Are flammable or combustible liquids present?
- G. Are quantities sufficient to present a hazard or change of use?
- H. Are liquids stored and marked properly in cabinets?
- I. Is storage 24" below the ceiling?
- J. Is storage 18" below sprinkler systems?
- K. Based on height of storage, what sprinkler protection hazard class should be used?
- L. Does the storage effect exiting the building or present hazards to exits?
- M. Are chemicals stored?
- N. Are material safety data sheets available and reported to Fire Department?
- O. Are storage areas "approved" for storage uses? (mechanical rooms, electrical closets, pump rooms, generator rooms)
- P. Do the storage areas have proper fire containment features?
- Q. Is a fire safety permit required to store this material?
- R. If storage is outside, is it properly stored?
- S. Is the storage dangerous to adjoining properties?
- T. Are adequate fire prevention measures present, or should storage be reduced to reasonable levels?

KEY INSPECTION POINTS: ALARM SYSTEMS

- A. When is the alarm system operational?
- B. When was the last alarm test conducted?
- C. Try to have the system tested in your presence by Owners or Owner Rep.
- D. Are the detectors mounted properly (4"/12" wall ceiling, N.F.P.A. 74 or N.F.P.A. 72 E spacing rules)
- E. Are the detectors clean or dirty looking?
- F. Does the alarm system have emergency power?
- G. Has the system been tested on emergency power?
- H. So the wiring methods appear correct? (Loose conduits or wire molds, other systems connected to alarms)
- I. Does that system have alarm trouble indicators and do they work?
- J. Is the alarm system supervised? If so how?
- K. Has the alarm system supervision been properly tested?
- L. Are all the devices in the system serviceable for maintenance purposes?
- M. Are their audible and visual alarms?
- N. Can the alarm system be effectively heard throughout the building?
- O. Are the detectors interconnected?
- P. When tested do they alarm throughout the property?
- Q. Are additional detectors required because of structural obstructions like door headers, changes in ceiling height, pockets or bays etc?
- R. Are there manual pull stations?
- S. Are the pull stations in the proper locations?
- T. Are they at the proper height?
- U. Do they work?
- V. Is there an enunciator panel and is it properly marked for Firefighters?
- W. Are the enunciator zones properly laid out? (1 per floor, 1 per 20,000 sq. feet, one per 300' linear feet)
- X. Are the detectors proper for the location that they are in?

KEY INSPECTION POINTS: MEANS OF EGRESS

- A. Occupant load using exit
- B. Effective width of exit
- C. Is the exit properly lighted? (artificial/emergency)
- D. Is the exit properly protected? (assembly/doors/hardware)
- E. Is there adequate headroom to exit?
- F. Do the doors swing in the direction of exiting? If not, are they required to?
- G. Are the doors able to be opened without keys or special knowledge?

TEST:

1. Can they be opened with a single action?
2. Would someone, never seeing the door, be able to open it in the dark?
3. Can this door be opened by a five year old as well as an eighty-five year old?
4. Will this door present problems to Firefighters in the building during a fire emergency?

H. Safety of the Egress

TEST:

1. Can all occupants or potential occupants use this exit safely for escape?
2. Is the egress stair, rails, and guards, structurally sound?
3. Is the egress well lit, clear and unobstructed, to the public way?
4. Would I feel confident using this egress under emergency or fire conditions?

KEY INSPECTION POINTS: COMPARTMENTATION

- A. Identify fire areas requiring compartmentation: storage, exits, and tenant spaces, use group separations
- B. What hourly ratings are required: 1Hr, 2Hr, 3Hr?
- C. Are walls of the proper construction?
- D. Are walls continuous through the ceiling space to the floor/ceiling assembly above?
- E. Are there penetrations in the construction?
- F. Is the penetration of the construction properly fire stopped?
- G. Are fusible link fire dampers provided?
- H. Are they accessible for maintenance and inspection?
- I. Do plastic items penetrate the construction?
- J. Are proper plastic pipe fire stops provided? (A.S.T.M. E-814)
- K. Are smoke barriers properly sealed above the ceiling?
- L. Are opening protection devices required? (doors, windows, dampers)
- M. If opening protection is required, what rating is needed? (Class A-3Hrs, Class B-1/1-1/2Hrs, Class C – 45 min. etc)
- N. Are opening protectives tight fitting?
- O. Are automatic listed self closers provided?
- P. Are the proper fire door hardware items being provided, positive latching, coordinators, astragals, wire glass vision panels etc?
- Q. Are all the fire door controls operational: fusible links, cables, smoke detectors, and electro-magnets?
- R. What finish flame spread ratings are required?
- S. If a surface is treated, has it been properly maintained?
- T. Are all fire stopping requirements met within the compartment both vertically and horizontally?

KEY INSPECTION POINTS: MANUAL SUPPRESSION

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS:

- A. What hazard class does N.F.P.A. 10 require for extinguishers?
- B. Are extinguishers of proper size and type?
- C. Are extinguishers in proper locations and properly mounted at correct height?
- D. Are extinguishers charged and properly serviced?
- E. Are the hoses properly attached and flexible?
- F. Does the extinguisher require hydrostatic testing?
- G. Are operational instructions provided on the extinguisher?
- H. Are occupants properly trained to use the fire extinguishers provided?
- I. Are special hazards protected by their own compatible fire extinguishers?

FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDPIPES:

- A. Are the F.D. connections properly marked and capped?
- B. What type of standpipe is provided? (Class 1, Class 2, or Class 3)
- C. On Class 1 & 3 are connection threads compatible to Fire Department hose?
- D. On Class 2 & 3 are hose and racks properly maintained: loose or mildewed hose, no nozzles etc?
- E. Is the standpipe wet, dry pipe, or dry?
- F. Are pressure restricting devices or pressure reducing devices provided on the standpipes?
- G. Have these devices been tested and are they operational?
- H. What is the visible condition of the standpipe valves? (corroded, rusted, greased)
- I. Is the standpipe properly supported at floors?
- J. Are test records available and current on system servicing?
- K. Do cabinets allow for proper accessibility to the standpipe connections?
- L. Are threaded caps provided on all Class 1 standpipe connections?
- M. Are standpipes within adequate reach of all areas of the floor?

KEY INSPECTION POINTS: AUTOMATIC SUPPRESSION

- A. What type of suppression is provided? (sprinklers, halon, dry chemical)
- B. What hazard is being protected? (storage, life safety, range hood, etc)
- C. Is the protection provided adequate for the hazard being protected?
- D. Are Fire Department connections provided, marked, and capped?
- E. Are exterior and interior alarms provided?
- F. Is system connected to a fire alarm panel for supervision?
- G. Are all valves and supervision devices online and functional?
- H. Are all devices properly marked and identified on alarm control panels?
- I. Where are main control valves located, is room identified?
- J. Are valves open and is system online?
- K. In dry systems, is the proper air pressure provided, or is valve tripped?
- L. Is system hydraulic or pipe schedule type system?
- M. What hazard class protection is being provided for design and is that consistent with the materials in the building?
- N. Do valves appear greased or rusted?
- O. Are the sprinkler pipes properly supported with one hanger for any pipe over 36"?
- P. Are pipes properly maintained or are they corroded and scaled?
- Q. Are all areas required to be protected within the coverage patterns on the sprinkler heads?
- R. Are the sprinkler heads the proper type in the proper position?
- S. Are the sprinkler heads painted, bent, or disabled in some fashion?
- T. Are the sprinkler heads of the proper temperature range for the hazard they protect?
- U. Are the sprinkler heads obstructed by any means?
- V. Is sprinkler system testing documentation available and current?
- W. Are all area control valves identified and open?
- X. Are inspector test valves present on the system and properly identified?
- Y. Are all pieces of equipment accessible for inspection purposes?

KEY INSPECTION POINTS: CERTIFICATIONS

- A. Fire Alarm (Annual) (NJ State Certified Contractor)
- B. Sprinkler System (Annual) (NJ State Certified Contractor)
- C. Fire Suppression System (Bi-annual) (NJ State Certified Contractor)
- D. Elevator (Bi-annual) (Elevator Co. of Twp Building Insp.)
- E. Generator Service (Annual) (Contractor)
- F. Back-up exit and emergency light (Annual-if unable to verify yourself)
- G. Battery Smoke detectors (batteries changed annually if unable to verify yourself)
- H. Fire Drills (Monthly)
- I. Halon & FM-200 Systems (Bi-annual) (NJ State Certified Contractor)
- J. Boiler/Vessel Inspection (NJ State Inspectors)
- K. Back Flow Preventer (UCC permit) (NJ State Certified Contractor)

FIRE PREVENTION BASIC GOALS:

PREVENT FIRES
PROTECT PEOPLE
CONTROL FIRES

1. Prevent Fires

- A. POTENTIAL IGNITION SOURCES (electrical, chemical, mechanical)
- B. FUEL REGULATION (type, quantity, height, arrangement)

2. Protect People

- A. COMMUNICATIONS (fire alarms, smoke detectors)
- B. EGRESS SYSTEMS (type, safety, lighting, capacity, locks, components, fire resistance)
- C. DEFEND IN PLACE (fire barriers, doors, transoms, holes, ceilings)

3. Control Fire Development

- A. COMPARTATION (are doors closed, operation, tight fitting)
- B. MANUAL FIRE SUPPRESSION (Firefighter access, extinguishers, manual releases, standpipes)
- C. AUTOMATIC FIRE SUPPRESSION (sprinklers, pumps, operational features)
- D. SELF TERMINATION (fuel limits, fuel geometry, fuel density)

The New Jersey Uniform Fire Safety Code

INTENT & PURPOSE:

1. All sections of the State are covered by a minimum fire safety standard to protect the lives of its citizens.
2. Provide uniform and adequately funded Fire Prevention Inspections to protect the public in buildings and uses, which pose a serious life hazard.
3. Provide penalties for violators that are swiftly assessed and commensurate to the gravity of the offense.
4. To ensure Fire Code enforcement is efficient and coordinated and eliminates duplications of effort and confusion on the part of the public.
5. To ensure that codes and standards enforced on the State and Local level are interpreted consistently.

RELATIONSHIP OF NEW JERSEY CODES:

UNIFORM CONSTRUCTION CODE --- MINI/MAX

Enacted on January 1, 1977, this code establishes the construction standard for the State of New Jersey

Buildings must be designed to the U.C.C. as the minimum building standard.

Local officials may not request any building regulations more restrictive than the U.C.C.

SUBCHAPTER 4: "THE FIRE SAFETY CODE"

This regulation is a 4-year retrofit code, which will bring buildings not constructed within 100% to the U.C.C up to a minimum Fire Safety Standard.

NEW JERSEY STATE UNIFORM FIRE CODE

This code provides the minimum fire safety maintenance standard for all buildings in that State except Owner Occupied 1 & 2 family dwellings.

CHAPTER 2 SCOPE AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE NEW JERSEY UNIFORM FIRE SAFETY CODE

The Bureau of Fire Safety has accepted the authority and responsibility to enforce the State Fire Prevention Code within the jurisdiction of Jackson, New Jersey. This authority was established in the adoption of Ordinance. The enforcement power is structured as follows:

STATE ENFORCING AGENCY
Department of Community Affairs
Division of Fire safety

LOCAL ENFORCING AGENCY
Fire Officials
Fire Inspectors
Firefighters

The Bureau of Fire Safety, while being an arm of the Fire Department, is acting as an extension of the State Enforcing Agency. The Fire Official is the most important link between the Local Agency and the State. He is the focal point of all communications and is the authorizing agent for all of the orders and notices served under the act. The Fire Official is the Fire Bureaus Chief Administrator and coordinates day to day operations of the Fire Inspectors and oversees the operation of the Fire Safety Bureau on a daily basis.

SHORT HISTORY OF THE NEW JERSEY UNIFORM FIRE CODE

Application of the New Jersey Uniform Fire Code (NJUFC) is one of the many and varied services provided by most fire departments in the State of New Jersey. More importantly, it is a provision of service to which the "consumer public" or general citizenry is entitled. In order to better understand the NJUFC, a review of the events leading up to its enactment is imperative.

The State of New Jersey, along with the rest of the Nation, experienced an exceptionally large number of fires and fire deaths during the 1960's, 1970's and into the 1980's. In addition to significant fires and fire deaths in New Jersey's larger cities, two major fires with multiple fire deaths occurred in municipalities within Monmouth County. The Brinley Inn fire in Bradley Beach in 1980 resulted in the deaths of 24 people and the Beachview Rest Home fire in Keansburg in 1981 resulted in the deaths of 31 people. These tragedies were a major impetus, which led to enactment of the Uniform Fire Safety Act on November 12, 1983. State Senator John P. Caufield, who was also Director of the Newark Fire Department at the time, was one of the primary proponents of this legislation.

The purpose of the Uniform Fire Safety Act was the creation of a Fire Safety Commission whose responsibility was to ensure that all areas of the State are protected by a uniform, minimum fire safety code so that the lives and property of the State's citizens are guarded against the hazards presented by fire. Pursuant to enactment of the Uniform Fire Safety Act and the efforts of the Fire Safety Commission, the New Jersey Uniform Fire Code was adopted on February 19, 1985. The State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Division of Fire Safety oversees its application.

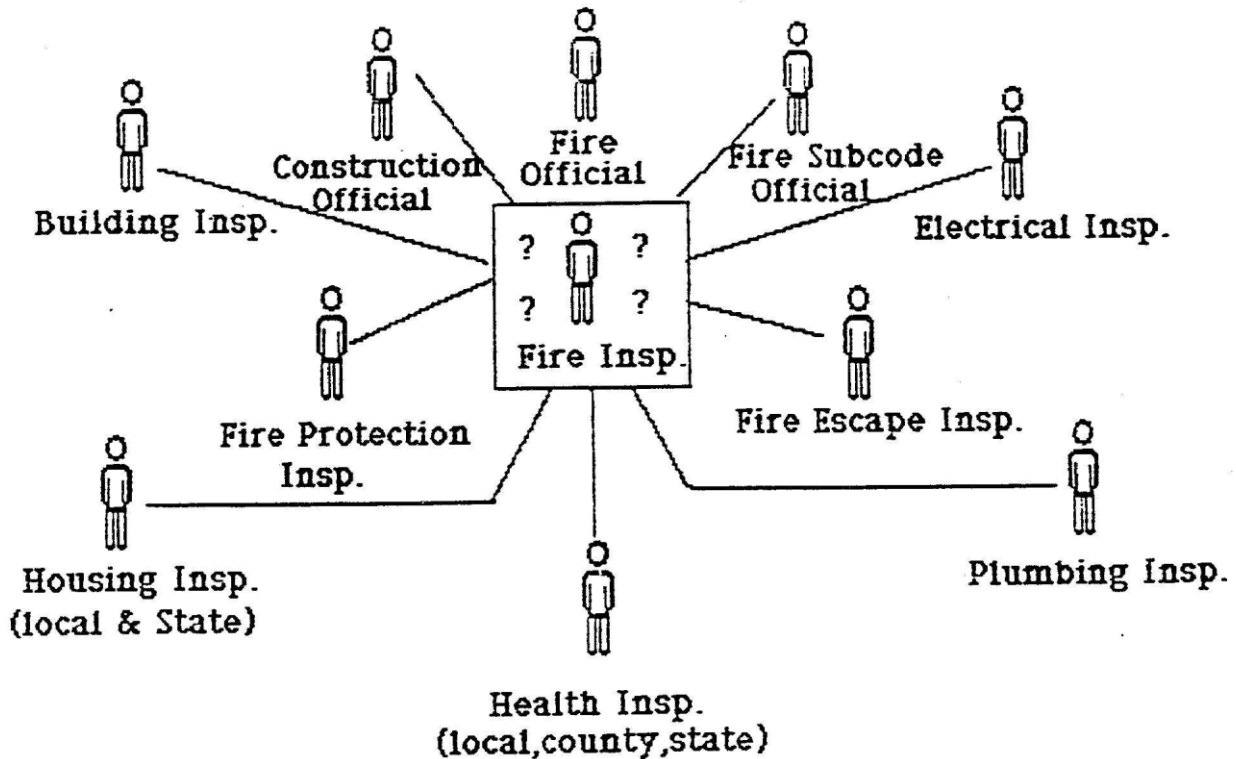
The NJUFC, in addition to regulating fire safety inspections throughout the State, also governs mandatory requirements for firefighter training, firefighter instruction, firefighting equipment, fire investigations, the management of fire and related emergency incidents, etc. With regard to fire safety, the NJUFC is essentially divided into two separate areas. The Fire Prevention Code, which was enacted as part of the NJUFC on February 19, 1985, and the Fire Safety Code, which was enacted as an addition, to the NJUFC on June 16, 1986.

The Fire Prevention Code regulates the proper maintenance of existing fire protection features of an occupancy; whereas, the Fire Safety Code addresses retrofit requirements in which modifications must be made to address the lack of fire safety in an occupancy. The most recent example of a retrofit requirement is Governor Whitman's signing into law on July 5, 2000 the "Sprinkler Bill" which requires all public and private colleges and boarding schools to install sprinklers. This law was enacted in response to the unfortunate and tragic deaths of Seton Hall University students as a result of a fire in their dormitory on January 19, 2000. Some other aspects of the NJUFC are as follows:

- Certificates of Smoke Detector and Carbon Monoxide Alarm Compliance (CSDCMAC) – prior to the sale, lease or change of occupancy of a residential dwelling unit, a CSDCMAC must be obtained. This certification attests to the fact that working smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms are properly located in residences.
- Windowless Basements – requires firefighter access openings, of specific dimensions, to provide entry into a below grade area; if an access opening is not of the required dimension, a fire detection system or fire suppression system is required. This section of the NJUFC was enacted due to the death of a New Jersey Firefighter in a basement fire lacking an appropriate access opening as well as a fire detection system or a fire suppression system.
- Truss Placards – requires structures of truss construction to be identified as such by having an emblem of a bright, reflective color and in the shape of a triangle affixed to them. This section of the NJUFC was enacted to alert firefighters to the truss construction of structures after the deaths of five New Jersey Firefighters in the collapse of a truss constructed structure involved in fire.
- Amusement Buildings – all structures that are designed to disorient, reduce vision, present barriers or impede the flow of traffic (such as haunted houses or houses of terror) are to be equipped with fire detection and suppression systems as well as various other fire safety provisions. Once again, this section of the NJUFC was enacted after a tragedy, the deaths of several teenagers in a haunted house in a New Jersey amusement park.
- Fire Safety Permits (FSP's) – a FSP is required in order to maintain, store or handle materials, or to conduct processes which produce conditions hazardous to life or property, or to install equipment used in connection with such activities. Some examples for which a FSP is required include the use of a torch, welding or cutting operations, discharging of fireworks, fumigation, bonfires, etc.
- General Fire Safety – pertains to a multitude of issues, which are specifically addressed within the NJUFC. This includes maintenance of fire detection and suppression systems, fire extinguishers, means of egresses, storage and housekeeping, electrical safety, heating appliance safety, cooking appliance safety, etc.

The NJUFC is extremely detailed and as a result, it requires competent fire inspectors to interpret and apply. Prior to becoming a fire inspector, an individual must become certified as a fire inspector and in order to become certified, appropriate coursework must be satisfactorily completed and a passing grade on an exam attained. In addition, once certified, the fire inspector must complete required continuing education training on an annual basis. Furthermore, if a fire inspector knowingly fails to perform his duty as imposed by the NJUFC, he or she can be held criminally liable. In conclusion, the citizenry of the State of New Jersey is indeed fortunate, that fire safety is regarded as such a serious matter and therefore, that we are all entitled to a minimum, acceptable level of fire safety as well.

FIRE INSPECTORS SCOPE OF AUTHORITY



*** Know your scope of Authority under the
Uniform Fire Code ***

***Write proper Referrals to Code Officials
when matters outside your scope of
authority are encountered ***