

International Sprinkler Scene



April - June 2020

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Coronavirus Slams Industry Events

The emergence of COVID-19, declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11th, has resulted in the postponement or cancellation of virtually all industry events over the next few months as countries struggle to contain its spread. The list of cancellations and postponements includes:

17-18 March - ABSpk conference in Sao Paulo – **postponed indefinitely**

29-30 April - NFSA annual conference in Phoenix, Arizona – **cancelled**

6-7 May - EFSN international conference (FSI 2020) – **rescheduled for 19-20 October 2020**

19-23 June CASA annual conference in Ottawa, Canada - **cancelled**

While many other meetings and smaller events have likewise been cancelled, the NFPA announced as recently as March 30th that its conference and expo is still scheduled to take place in Orlando, Florida on June 15-18, 2020.

One of the more interesting aspects of the response to the coronavirus has been the use of fire protection analogies by some news commentators. They have compared efforts by governments to encourage social distancing to removing fuel from a fire, or at least distributing the fuel more sparsely so as to rob a fire of its potential for growth. Much of the public recognizes that a single wood log will not readily burn, but requires radiation feedback from its neighbors. As a fire protection measure, this stands in contrast to preventing ignition, which would be possible only if a vaccine were available, or a known cure. The cure in this case would be analogous to a fire suppression system, something that could be administered even to those who have contracted the virus, but would stop it in its tracks.

Let's all hope that better prevention and protection measures are soon on their way.

IFSA Relocates to Chagrin Falls, Ohio

With the hiring of Paul Sincaglia as its new fulltime Managing Director, the IFSA has relocated its headquarters office to Chagrin Falls, Ohio in the United States.

The new address is: IFSA
132 South Franklin Street
Chagrin Falls, OH, 44022 USA



IFSA Members and Friends -

I can't begin to tell you how excited I am to start my tenure serving the IFSA. This position affords unique opportunities that allow all of us to measurably reduce the human, property and environmental costs of accidental fires like no other fire protection technology can. IFSA's successes in Europe and Latin America over the last 20 years are only the beginning. It is my intention to work with each of you and our industry partners to accelerate that success.

My original plans for this spring had included meeting many of you face to face. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 crisis has caused many, if not all of us, to alter our near-term plans. But that does not mean that IFSA will be standing still. Over the next month, I will be reaching out to each IFSA Member and our organizational allies to discuss the state of the water-based fire suppression industry and the goals for your businesses with the intent of incorporating them into IFSA's near and longer-term planning. In the interim, should you have any questions, comments, or ideas you just can't wait to share, please, please give me a call or shoot me an email. I look forward to working with all of you!

- Paul Sincaglia, IFSA Managing Director
psincaglia@ifsa.global +1-216-688-7980

Upcoming Fire Sprinkler Events

15-18 June 2020 – NFPA Conference & Expo®, Orlando, FL, USA, National Fire Protection Association, www.nfpa.org

15-17 September 2020 – Suppression, Detection and Signaling Research and Applications Conference SUPDET 2020
Universität Duisburg-Essen and Fire Protection Research Foundation, Duisburg, Germany, www.nti.uni-due.de/aube20

13-16 September – AFSA39 – American Fire Sprinkler Association Annual Convention, Orlando, FL, USA www.firesprinkler.org

29-30 September 2020 – 5th Expo Fire Protection Mexico 2020 and International Congress, AMRACI/CONAPCI, Mexico City, Mexico, www.fpimexico.com

19-20 October 2020 (rescheduled from May 2020 dates) – EFSN Fire Sprinkler International, Amsterdam, Netherlands
www.firesprinklerinternational.com

8-10 November 2020 (changed from October dates) – SFPE Annual Conference and Exhibition, Atlanta, GA, USA, Society of Fire Protection Engineers, www.sfpe.org

19 November 2020 – British Automatic Fire Sprinkler Association Annual General Meeting and Dinner, Birmingham, England
www.bafsa.org.uk

2-3 December 2020 – 9th VdS-FireSafety Cologne – Cologne, Germany www.vds-global.com

The Fire Sprinkler Industry as a “Critical Infrastructure Industry”

As governors of multiple states in the U.S. are ordering shutdowns of all nonessential businesses to help limit spread of the coronavirus, the NFSA is encouraging its members to contact their governors and attempt to convince them that the work of installing fire sprinkler systems should be exempted from any shutdown. In an e-mail to the membership on March 20th, NFSA President Shane Ray offered the following:

“The National Fire Sprinkler Association believes that fire sprinkler work is “critical infrastructure industry” as defined by the Homeland Security Act of 2002 under the Department of Homeland Security.

“As states around the country implement mandatory shelter in place orders it is critical that fire protection systems be maintained. Additionally, as states begin to modify buildings to accommodate the sick, it is essential that they be protected from fire by these systems. Please contact your governor on behalf of the fire protection industry to request that the critical infrastructure work of fire protection be exempted from any work stoppages.”

News from Affiliated Fire Sprinkler Associations

AMRACI (Mexico)

AMRACI is helping to publicize the dangers of counterfeit sprinklers following the issuance of a press release by UL with regard to sprinklers found in Mexico City bearing a counterfeit certification mark. The chrome pendent 68°C/155°F sprinklers carry wrench boss markings suggesting they were manufactured by Angus in 2016, and are identified on their deflector as model 15SSP.

BAFSA (UK)

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, BAFSA has confirmed that all college courses leading to the L2 Certificate in Fire Sprinkler Installation (Day Release, Block Release and EWR) have been postponed until further notice as colleges avoid face-to-face classes.

European Fire Sprinkler Network

Coronavirus concerns led to cancellation of the March 28th meeting of the EFSN Technical Committee. The meeting had been scheduled to take place in Milan, Italy, tied to a one-day conference of the Italian Chapter of the Society of Fire Protection Engineers, also canceled.

Although EFSN has postponed its Fire Sprinkler International conference in Amsterdam from its early May dates to 19-20 October, with the EFSN Council meeting on the 21st, it will still hold its Annual General Meeting on May 5th, but will limit the meeting to a half-hour online, dealing with essential matters of business.

National Fire Sprinkler Network (UK)

Like most other groups during this global health crisis, the All-Party Parliamentary Fire Safety Rescue Group is inactive at present. The House of Commons is in recess and is next scheduled to sit on April 11th, but the website notes that “future parliamentary business is provisional and subject to change.”

Sprinklerfrämjandet (Sweden)

Although Sweden has been taking a different approach to the pandemic than other countries, Sprinklerfrämjandet has nevertheless cancelled its April 16th annual meeting. Unlike in neighboring Denmark and Norway, restaurants, ski slopes, preschools and grade schools in Sweden have all remained open to this point, and the government is relying on voluntary efforts of the citizenry to combat the pandemic, including washing of hands, maintaining social distancing and avoiding endangering the elderly.

National Fire Sprinkler Association (USA)

NFSA is advising its members that the Coronavirus Economic Stabilization Act of 2020 signed into law on March 27th not only includes more than \$2 trillion in aid to combat both the virus and the negative economic impacts associated with social distancing, but also a technical correction to the 2017 Tax Cut and Jobs Act (TCJA) that gives incentives to corporations that retrofit their businesses with fire sprinkler systems. According to the NFSA, “One of the provisions of the TCJA was intended to provide accelerated depreciation for what are known as real estate qualified improvement properties (QIP). Real estate qualified improvement property is defined as any improvement to an interior portion of a nonresidential building that’s placed in service after the date the building is first placed in service. In other words, it applies to all building upgrades and retrofits, with the exception of enlarging the existing building or installing an elevator or escalator. This definition includes fire sprinkler retrofits and would mandate a 15-year depreciation schedule for fire sprinklers and also make them eligible for bonus depreciation.” NFSA notes that, due to a legislative drafting error in 2017, real estate qualified improvement property was not included in the TCJA list of 15-year properties, even though Congress clearly intended it to be.

NFSA explains that “in the case of bonus depreciation, this would allow fire sprinklers to be depreciated over the next 10 years, even quicker than the 15-year schedule. After 10 years, fire sprinklers would permanently revert to the 15-year schedule. This is an enormous improvement over the legacy 39-year depreciation schedule for fire sprinklers in commercial buildings. Most importantly, it removes what is probably the single biggest hindrance property owners and local elected officials are faced with when deciding to either install sprinklers or mandate them – cost.”

New York State Agrees Sprinkler Industry is Critical

On the same day that NFSA issued its call for the fire sprinkler industry to be recognized as a critical infrastructure industry (page 2), New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo issued guidance relative to his executive order 202.6 closing non-essential businesses in what has become an epicenter for the coronavirus. Among businesses permitted to continue as essential are “Construction, including...skilled trades such as electricians, plumbers...other related construction firms and professionals for essential infrastructure or for emergency repair and safety purposes”

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