

# SCHULTE & ASSOCIATES

## Building Code Consultants

3500 Creighton Road, K5

Pensacola, FL 32504

fgeschulte@aol.com

847.312.7617

## FIRE PROTECTION HISTORY-PART 161: 1921 (INSTITUTIONAL (OCCUPANCY) FIRE SAFETY)

By Richard Schulte

A portion of the Report of the Committee on Public Information presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Fire Protection Association in 1921 addressed the fire safety problem in institutional occupancies. The following is an excerpt from the report addressing institutional occupancies:

*“ . . . .The Committee took special action during the year toward safeguarding the inmates of hospitals, asylums and similar institutions. Over a million sick, crippled, aged, blind, insane, orphaned and otherwise unfortunate or defective persons are ordinarily found in some ten thousand institutions in our country, yet a hospital burns every day; half that many asylums or other institutions are damaged or destroyed each week. Of every sixteen institutions in the country, one suffers a serious fire each year, and several times as many fires occur without assuming sufficient size to get into the public prints. The number of really safe institutions of this sort is small and in the large majority of the older institutions the conditions frequently are appalling. Wishing therefore to do this year for hospitals what we did for the protection of school houses last year the Committee printed 13,000 copies of a splendid 52-page illustrated booklet by H. Walter Forster, Chairman of our Committee on Safety to Life, on "Fire Protection for Hospitals, Asylums and Similar Institutions," a copy of which was placed in the hands of the managers or superintendents of all public institutions in the states and provinces. The function of the pamphlet was to drive home the seriousness of existing conditions, to indicate some of the reasons for these conditions, and to set forth the essential facts that the management of an institution needs to know to enable adequate fire prevention measures to be taken and suitable protection provided.”*

Of particular interest in the excerpt above are the fire statistics for institutional occupancies.

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**Source:** “*Proceedings of the Twenty-fifth Annual [NFPA] Meeting*”, San Francisco, California, 1921.