

**FIRE PROTECTION HISTORY-PART 201: 1903
(SPRINKLER SYSTEM FIRE DEPARTMENT CONNECTIONS)**

By Richard Schulte

The seventh Annual Meeting of the National Fire Protection Association was held in Chicago in late May 1903. In a discussion regarding the causes for sprinkler system failure, the question of the use of the fire department connections by the fire service was raised. The following is the text of the portion of the discussion which relates to the use of fire department connections provided on sprinkler systems:

***Mr. Wilmerding.** I would like to inquire whether in Fire No. 1820 there was a fire department connection with the sprinkler system; such a connection would have been most valuable in a case of that kind.*

***Mr. Anderson.** That was the Hardman, Peck & Co. fire. The fire started in an adjoining building (not equipped with sprinklers) and communicated to a building equipped, by fire doors, not approved by the Board, but they held the fire very well for a time. It was a very cold night. The sprinklers did good work until the tank was exhausted. The fire department failed to make attachment to the outside sprinkler connection, but we saved the better part of the section on Forty-ninth street, and lost the adjoining and communicating section on Forty-eighth street.*

***The President.** The question was asked whether there was an outside sprinkler connection.*

***Mr. Anderson.** There was, but it was not used by the fire department.*

***A Member.** Is there any hostility on the part of the fire department to making the sprinkler connection?*

Mr. Anderson. *I will state that our late chief engineer promised a number of times to make connection with sprinkler equipments, whenever he could not get at the fire with his hose, but he failed to do it. We had an order issued by the present acting chief of the fire department, on the 18th of April, ordering the captains of engine companies arriving first at the fire to connect on, whenever the building was equipped with sprinklers. Before the issuing of that order we had prepared 250 copies of our sprinkler book for distribution throughout the fire department. I doubt if the officers of the fire department have had time yet to familiarize themselves with the location of these sprinkler equipments. This month we had a fire in New York, and when the fire department and fire patrol arrived they had difficulty in getting into the building, and when they did succeed in doing so they found that the sprinklers had operated, and 101 heads had opened and emptied the tank. The fire department failed to connect at this fire, and the matter has been called to the attention of the department officers, and is receiving proper attention. The Chiefs heretofore have not been in favor of using the sprinklers, and the firemen generally have not looked upon them with favor, but we have good reason now to think that the present fire department officers will make proper use of the outside connections.”*

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