

### FIRE PROTECTION HISTORY-PART 204: 1904 (SPRINKLER SYSTEM STATISTICS)

By Richard Schulte

The eighth Annual Meeting of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) was held in late May 1904 in New York. Among the topics of discussion at this meeting was the fire record of sprinkler systems. The following is an excerpt of this discussion:

*“Table IX. Effect of sprinklers. Sprinklers have practically or entirely extinguished fires in 1,991 cases or 67 per cent, and held fire in check in 795, or 27 per cent. The first figure is noticeably large and speaks for the completeness with which the sprinklers generally do their work. In some of these cases, however, and in most of those where fire was held in check, outside aid from hose streams was necessary in order to complete the extinguishment of fire, and the fire records would show that in many cases it is essential to have one or two good hose streams at command in order to make the control of fire a certainty.*”

*With the undesirable features of poor construction, occupancy, or hazards, the sprinklers are handicapped and, while they may hold fire in check, it is often not possible for them to extinguish it, and delay in obtaining outside aid may result disastrously.*

*The 186 fires where sprinklers have been unsuccessful in holding a fire have previously been classified in this report, and each one of these fires is worthy of careful study in order that the lessons they teach may be understood and where possible applied towards improving conditions and thus reducing the chances of severe losses in sprinklered risks.”*

Based upon the statistics presented above, it is apparent that even the early sprinkler system installations, sprinkler systems installed in the late 1800's and early 1900's, had amassed an impressive record of successful operations.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Source:** “*Proceedings of the Eighth Annual [NFPA] Meeting*”, New York, 1904.

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