

**FIRE PROTECTION HISTORY-PART 258: 1918
(DEFINITION OF THE TERM "INCOMBUSTIBLE")**

By Richard Schulte

The twenty-second Annual Meeting of the National Fire Protection Association was held in Chicago in May 1918. Among the various topics discussed at this meeting was the Report of Committee on Nomenclature. A portion of this Committee's Report addressed the definition of the term "incombustible". The following is an excerpt of the Committee's Report addressing this term:

"Incombustible.—The term "Incombustible" indicates materials or constructions which will not ignite when subjected to ordinary fire.

Alternative Definition.—The term "Incombustible" indicates articles, goods, wares, merchandise or materials of construction which will not burn or support combustion. Articles, goods, wares, merchandise or materials of construction shall be held to be "incombustible" when the individual units comprising the finished product do not contain combustible material in sufficient quantity to procure such a simultaneous or destructive combustion of these units as would constitute a menace to life, limb or property by fire."

It should be noted that the definition of the term "incombustible" above does not contain any reference to a standardized test. The standardized test referenced in the "modern" definition of the term "noncombustible" had not been developed in 1918.

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Source: "Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Annual [NFPA] Meeting", Chicago, Illinois, 1918.

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