

**FIRE PROTECTION HISTORY-PART 225: 1917
(FIRE WALL DEFINITION/CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS)**

By Richard Schulte

The twenty-first Annual Meeting of the National Fire Protection Association was held in Washington, D. C. in May 1917. One of the committees reporting at this meeting was the Committee on Nomenclature. The following is an excerpt of this report addressing the definition of the term “fire wall”:

*“**Fire Wall.**- A wall subdividing a building to restrict the spread of fire. It shall have such thickness as to prevent the communication of fire by heat conduction.*

It shall have such stability as to remain intact after the complete combustion of the contents of the building on one side of the wall; and its structural integrity shall be unaffected by any wreckage of the building resulting from such fire, or its extinguishment.

In Fire-resistive buildings with full protection floors and roof, a fire wall need not be continuous through all stories, nor need it extend through the roof. In all other buildings it shall start at the foundation, be continuous through all stories, and extend three (3) feet above the roof.”

The definition of the term “fire wall” is of particular interest because it differs from the accepted definition of the term utilized today. The definition above permits a wall which is supported on structural elements of a fire-resistive building to be considered a fire wall.

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Source: “*Proceedings of the Twenty-First Annual [NFPA] Meeting*”, Washington, D. C., 1917.

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