

**FIRE PROTECTION HISTORY-PART 275: 1918
(AREA LIMITATIONS/SPRINKLER PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS)**

By Richard Schulte

The twenty-second Annual Meeting of the National Fire Protection Association was held in Chicago in May 1918. The Committee on Fire-Resistive Construction presented a report at this meeting. Included in the Committee's Report were provisions which addressed area limitations for buildings of fire resistive construction. The following is an excerpt of the portion of the Committee's Report addressing area limitations:

“Area.—The area within inclosing or fire walls shall not exceed 7,500 square feet, with no dimension greater than 125 feet for a building without automatic sprinklers, or 20,000 square feet, unrestricted as to linear dimensions, for a building fully equipped with automatic sprinklers.”

The area limitation indicated above was intended to be a general recommendation for buildings of fire resistive construction which would be modified based upon the occupancy of the building.

Even with fire resistive construction, the recommended area limitations for both unsprinklered and sprinklered buildings are highly restrictive. No doubt, the reason for these restrictive area limitations was the limited fire fighting capability of fire fighters. In 1918, horse-drawn fire apparatus was still in use and fire fighters did not have self-contained breathing apparatus.

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

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