

FIRE PROTECTION HISTORY-PART 75: 1914 (NFPA RESOLUTIONS)

By Richard Schulte

The 18th annual meeting of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) was held in Chicago in 1914. The following are resolutions adopted by the Association at this meeting:

“RESOLUTIONS FOR 1914.

The National Fire Protection Association, assembled in Chicago for its eighteenth annual meeting, calls once more upon all citizens to aid the utmost its campaign against the fire waste.

The destruction of life and created resources already suffered by the United States and Canada in the first four months of 1914 is deplorable evidence of the undiminished magnitude of this problem and the need for unceasing effort for its solution.

The inadequacy of water supplies in many cities due to their rapid growth in area and population; the more common use of explosives and inflammable oils; the growing use for manufacturing of buildings never designed for that purpose or inadequately provided with exists, and many other complex features of modern life are creating new fire hazards. These demand increased vigilance and initiative from those in authority.

The National Fire Protection Association advocates the following measures in its warfare against the needless sacrifice of human lives and property by fire: --

- (1) *The encouragement of fire-resistive building construction through the adoption of improved building codes in all State, Cities and Towns. The inclusion in such codes of adequate rules for exit facilities based on the occupancy of all buildings.*

- (2) *The adoption of laws and ordinances requiring the installation of automatic sprinkler systems as fire extinguishing agents in all factories, commercial establishments and city blocks. The adoption of ordinances requiring the construction of fire division walls not only as a property protecting device but as providing the best life-saving exit facility.*
- (3) *The establishment by law of a Fire Marshal in every state, who shall be a trained man with trained assistants competent to direct the work as statistician, educator and prosecutor.*
- (4) *The investigation of the cause of all fires by public officials.*
- (5) *The consolidation of all legal forces so as to provide for the systematic inspection of all buildings by local firemen, and technically trained building and factory inspectors so as to insure the vigorous enforcement of rules for cleanliness, good housekeeping, and the maintenance of safe and unobstructed exits, fire-fighting apparatus and other protection devices.*
- (6) *The especial safeguarding of schools, theaters, factories and all other places in which numbers of people congregate or are employed.*
- (7) *The vigorous state and municipal regulation of the transportation, storage and use of all inflammable liquids and explosives.*
- (8) *A careful study of municipal water supplies, their adequacy and reliability with special reference to their adequacy in case of conflagrations.*
- (9) *The universal adoption and use of the safety match.*
- (10) *The education of children and the public generally in careful habits regarding the use of fire. In the furtherance of these objects we appeal for the co-operation of all citizens. We ask them to help in the dissemination of our valuable literature and in the use of the standards of fire protection so carefully worked out by our Committees and Laboratories to the end that the lives and substance of our people shall not continue to be dissipated by a reckless, preventable waste.*

Mr. Phillips: Mr. President, I move the adoption of the resolutions.

(The motion was adopted.)”

Of particular interest in the list of “*measures*” included in the NFPA resolutions is the recommendation for the increased use of both fire resistive building construction and sprinkler protection. Also of interest is the recommendation for “*the systematic inspection of all [existing] buildings*” to verify that fire protection features provided in buildings are being properly maintained. Although we have implemented the recommendation to provide sprinkler protection in buildings, including one- and two-family dwellings, we have yet to implement the recommendation for “*systematic [maintenance] inspection*” of existing buildings.

* * * * *