ITM Best Practices for Limiting Liability

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Russ is the Executive Chairman of Telgian Holdings Inc., an international fire protection and life safety services company. He is a graduate of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas with 45 years of experience in the fire and life safety profession. Russ is a former chair of the board NFPA, is a board member for NFPA Global Solutions, and is on the NICET Board of Governors. He serves on NFPA Technical Committees including NFPA 13 Installation and Sprinkler Discharge Criteria, NFPA 3 System Commissioning, NFPA 4 Testing of Integrated Systems, among others. He has provided training and presentations in over 40 countries around the world. He has authored numerous articles and training materials used throughout the industry.

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The authority on fire, electrical, and building safety

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What Liabilities?

- Contract Disputes
  - Work Scope
  - Owner vs service provider responsibilities
  - Payment terms
- Inspector Safety
- Reputational
  - Reporting requirements
  - Licenses

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Best Practices

- Contracts and Agreements
- Understand the current NFPA 25
- Know your customer
- Standard processes and procedures
- Technically proficient inspectors
- Responding to incidents

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Contracts and Agreements

- What is a contract?
- Owner's responsibilities**
- Detailed work scope and exclusions**
- Reporting requirements**
- Limits to liability
- Schedule
- Safety

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What is a contract?

A contract has three parts:

An offer

Acceptance

Consideration

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Owner's Responsibilities

- Freeze Protection
- Access
- Changes to building or hazards
- Managing Impairments
- Record keeping
- Water supply status during ITM
- Safety

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Owner's Responsibilities

The owner must have manufacturers' literature available to provide specific instructions for inspecting, testing, and maintaining valves and associated equipment.

The owner must coordinate with the entity conducting activities to mitigate any water damage caused by the discharge of water.

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Detailed Work Scope and Exclusions

- List the inspections and tests to be conducted
  - Be specific as you are only responsible for what you have contracted to do
  - Avoid general statements
- List what is not included
  - Maintenance activities
  - Repairs or corrective actions

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Reporting Requirements

- Jurisdictional reporting
- Third-party administrators
- Reporting fee structure
- Tagging including removal of tags showing non-compliance
- Maintenance of records

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Understand the current NFPA 25

- Role of the inspector**
- Classifying Conditions
- Notification of Impairments**
- Signage
- Inactive systems
- Automated inspections and testing

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Role of the Inspector

Inspection, testing, and maintenance shall be performed by qualified personnel for the specific tasks performed in accordance with this standard.

Qualified personnel are defined as competent and capable individuals having met the requirements and training for a given field acceptable to the AHJ

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Role of the Inspector

- Face of your company
- Follow the agreed upon work scope
- Work safely
- Stay within skill set
- Classification of conditions(??)
- Communicate effectively

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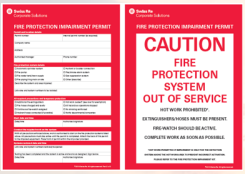
Impairment Procedures



- When are they required?
- Who is responsible to implement?
- What is needed during routine ITM?

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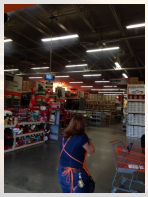
Impairment Procedures



During ITM, water supplies, including fire pumps, must remain in service unless under constant attendance by qualified personnel or unless impairment procedures are followed.

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Know your Customer

- Who is the "real" customer?
- How knowledgeable are they about their systems?
- Why are they doing ITM?
- What are their greatest risks?
- Do they share your values?**

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When do you say "no"?

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Standard Procedures and Processes

- Safety practices**
- Pre-planning with owner
- Conducting Inspections and Tests
- Reporting procedures
- Classifying abnormal conditions**
- Impairment procedures
- Post inspection/test communication

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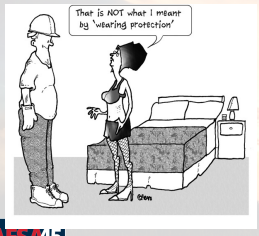
Safety Practices



- The owner must advise anyone performing ITM regarding hazardous materials stored on the premises.
- Confined spaces
- Fall protection
- Electrical safety
- Unsafe work areas

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Classifying abnormal conditions

- Who does the classification and/or review?
- Context for prioritizing corrections
- Reporting "out of scope" observations

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Technically proficient Inspectors

- Defining qualified
  - NFPA 25
  - Technical aptitude
- Certifications
  - NICET
- Training
  - Initial
  - Inservice

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Responding to Incidents

- Assist in rectifying situation
- Notify supervisor as soon as possible
- Do not admit wrongdoing– "I'm sorry" can be very expensive
- Complete internal incident report immediately or as soon after as possible
- Avoid signing incident report of customer
- Pictures—lots of pictures
- Protect physical evidence

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In a nutshell . . .

- Follow the scope of work
- Consistent inspection, testing procedures, and reporting
- Clear communication of deficiencies
- Signed work completion documents
- If scope cannot be completed, clear communication and timelines provided
- Remember that mistakes happen. Do not inadvertently discourage factual reporting
- Documentation is best defense against frivolous claims

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Questions or Thoughts
AFSA45

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Thank you!
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2027 Training Schedule

WEBINARS

1/6	Updates to NFPA 20
1/20	Calculating Pressure Reducing Hose Valves
2/3	Consumer Alert: Nitrogen in Sprinkler Systems
2/17	Reviewing Hydraulic Calculations
3/3	Updates to NFPA 13, 2028 Ed.
3/17	Updates to NFPA 13R & 13D, 2028 Eds.
4/7	Topic Coming Soon
4/21	NFPA 25: Roles & Responsibilities
5/5	Standpipe Flow Test Procedures
5/19	Storage 101
6/2	NFPA Technical Meeting - Voting Guide
6/16	Topic Coming Soon
6/30	Topic Coming Soon
7/7	Updates to NFPA 14, 2027 Edition
7/21	Adjacent Hazards & Design Methods
8/4	Acceptance Testing
8/18	Modifications to Existing Systems
9/22	Topic Coming Soon
10/6	Seismic 101
10/20	Proposed Updates to NFPA 25, 2029 Ed.
11/3	Evaluating Fire Pump Flow Tests
11/17	Top 10 Tech Reviews
12/1	Designing Water Storage Tanks
12/15	Pump Room Layout

PROGRAMS

Feb 9 - Mar 5 Apr 20 - May 14 Aug 3 - Aug 27** Oct 26 - Nov 19	Beginning Design School*
Apr 26 - May 7 Nov 1 - 12	Intermediate Design School*
Feb 8 - 10** Apr 12 - 14 Jul 12 - 14 Oct 11 - 13	Sprinkler Hydraulics Calculations Workshop
Apr 19 - 21 Oct 18 - 20	Advanced Hydraulics Calculations Workshop
Feb 11** Apr 30 Jul 23 Sep 24	Introduction to the Fire Sprinkler Industry
Mar 1 - 3 May 17 - 19 Aug 16 - 18 Oct 18 - 20**	NFPA 25 Essentials Workshop
Jun 7 - 10 Sep 20 - 23	Experienced Inspector Skills Lab
Mar 4 - 5 May 20 - 21 Aug 19 - 20 Oct 21 - 22**	NFPA 25 Fire Pump Workshop
Spring Summer Fall	ITM Inspector Development Program* *This program is 20 months.*

** Hybrid course **At General Air Products Lab, Exton, PA*

AFSA46

September 8-11	Manchester Grand Hyatt San Diego, CA

For More Details Visit:
firesprinkler.org

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Dates subject to change. Programs subject to minimum registrations.

rev 9/14/2026

Virtual Instruction Path (VIP)

for Sprinkler Fitting Apprentices

Level 1 - Begins January 2027

Level 2 - Begins February 2027

Level 3 - Begins January 2027

Level 4 - Begins March 2027

www.firesprinkler.org/VIP

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HANDS-ON WORKSHOPS FOR 2027

FEATURING AFSA'S TRAINING LAB

NFPA 25 Essentials Workshop

Mar | May | Aug | Oct

Description: Understand roles, responsibilities, and NFPA 25 ITM procedures through hands-on testing of wet systems, dry systems, and fire pumps.

NFPA 25 Fire Pump Workshop

Mar | May | Aug | Oct

Description: Develop practical NFPA 25 fire pump ITM skills, including no-flow and full-flow testing, water supply graphing, and performance evaluation.

Introduction to the Fire Sprinkler Industry

Feb | Apr | Jul | Sep

Description: This course is designed for those new to the industry. An introductory, wide-ranging 8-hour course that provides a broad overview of core fire sprinkler industry concepts for those new to the field.

Experienced Inspector Skills Lab NEW

Mar | Sep

Description: Take your ITM expertise beyond the basics. Designed for experienced technicians, this course combines focused classroom instruction with hands-on system lab training to strengthen your application of current NFPA 25 inspection, testing, and maintenance requirements. Refine fire sprinkler testing practices, improve documentation, deliver more consistent service, and help reduce liability while reinforcing knowledge commonly covered on certification exams.

Learn more about AFSA's fire sprinkler lab featuring functional risers, a spray room, fire pumps, and an interactive classroom.

firesprinkler.org/lab