

Fire Suppression Program FAQ

New Location

The DFS moved to a new location in January 2010. The new office is at:

DFS
690 Kipling Street, Ste. 2000
Lakewood, CO 80215
303-239-4600 (main)
303-239-5887 (fax)

Plans Review

Q: Is the Plan Intake/Permit form only for State of Colorado projects?

A: Yes, all of the forms, procedures, and permit processes identified on this website (and in the Suppression Rules) are strictly for projects wherein the State of Colorado Division of Fire is the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ).

Check with all local jurisdictions for their specific project/inspection requirements.

Q: My town has a fire department, why don't I send my plans to them?

A: The Division of Fire Safety is considered the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) in all cities, towns, and areas that do not have a current certified fire inspector. In these cases, the DFS will both perform the plan review and all required inspections related to the fire suppression system.

You can find out if your jurisdiction has a certified fire inspector at the www.dfs.state.co.us website.

Q: Why don't I send my fire alarm plans to the DFS.

A: The DFS Fire Suppression Program does not regulate fire alarms (not connected to the suppression system). These plans need to be sent to the local fire/building official for their review and inspection.

In cases where the local jurisdiction is unable or unwilling to review/inspect the fire alarm, the DFS can perform these activities under an Advanced Technical Assistance agreement. This agreement must be formally requested by the local jurisdiction, NOT the suppression contractor.

Keep in mind that fire alarms are regulated by our Public School program so if the project involves a Colorado Public School then it will need to be submitted to the DFS.

Q: How many sets of plans do I need to send to the Division of Fire Safety?

A: A minimum of three (3) sets of plans (drawings) need to be submitted. Only one (1) set of product specifications and two (2) sets of hydraulic calculations are required.

Q: My plans came back “Not Approved.” Do I have to resubmit three (3) entire new set of drawings?

A: Yes. Although, depending on the reason for non-approval, the designer may be able to indicate changes by way of a letter, “clouding” changes on plans, or calling the plan examiner to discuss the situation.

It is best to discuss the actual requirements with the plan reviewer before resubmitting.

Q: How long will my plans take to review once received in your office?

A: We make every effort to review plans within two (2) weeks of receiving them; though this is not a guarantee.

Q: May I call the Division to find out the status of my plan review?

A: In order to ensure efficiency, it is best to allow the plans examiners to contact you if your plans will be delayed or there are problems found with the submitted design.

Q: Can I request that my plans have an expedited review? Even if I pay more?

A: No, we generally review plans in the order received. Also, the State of Colorado cannot accept extra fees to expedite plan review.

Q: Can I drop off plans or do they need to be mailed in?

A: Either, depending on your location, you may mail the plans to the office or personally drop them off. Understand that either method you choose is treated the same--no preferential treatment is given to the order of review.

Q: My company won a bid for a health care facility. Do I have to submit plans to you? Anyone else?

A: Any health care or institutional care facility requires plan submittal to BOTH the Division of Fire Safety (if the AHJ) and Department of Public Health.

Q: Does the Division accept electronic (CAD, .pdf, etc.,) plans?

A: No, the Division is not currently accepting electronic plans for review.

UPDATE: The Division is in the process of establishing an electronic submittal process which should be completed by the first quarter of 2011.

Q: My company is installing a suppression system in a public school. Do I have to do anything different?

A: Yes, the Division of Fire Safety manages a separate Public School Program. All plan submittals and inquiries should be sent to the Division of Fire Safety. Information regarding this program can be found at the DFS website under the Public School Program link.

Q: Does the Division bill my company for plan review and inspection services?

A: Yes, all billing is performed electronically and on a monthly basis. In order to be in “good-standing” with the DFS all outstanding balances shall be paid within 60 days of the invoice date.

Q: Does the Division recognize NFPA’s recent Antifreeze ban on new construction projects?

A: Yes, effective August 25, 2010, the DFS will not accept plans designed to NFPA 13 (dwelling units only), 13R, or 13D wherein antifreeze is used in the design.

The DFS is also advising fire suppression contractors to adhere to the guidance by NFPA regarding existing suppression systems using antifreeze. More details on the NFPA’s antifreeze stance can be found at www.nfpa.org or at the DFS website.

Q: How much does the DFS charge for basic services?

A: Suppression program charges are charged at an hourly rate for both plan review and field inspections. The current rates are:

- \$10.00 to submit a new set/resubmitted set of plans.
- \$55.00/hr for plan review (minimum 1-hour)
- \$55.00/hr for inspections (minimum 1-hour)
- \$55.00/hr travel time to/from project sites (minimum 1-hour)
 - Each 40 miles travel is equivalent to 1-hour.
- \$55.00 for all annual contractor certification levels.

Inspections

Q: How do I schedule a suppression inspection?

A: Call Steve Gasowski at 303-239-4669 or email him at steve.gasowski@cdps.state.co.us.

School-related projects must be scheduled online under the Public School Program link.

Q: When should I call for an inspection?

A: A minimum of 72-hours is required to schedule your inspection.

Q: What do I need at my inspection?

A: All contractors shall have the Fire System Permit, an approved set of plans, all equipment necessary to test, and applicable forms (e.g. NFPA 24, Contractors Aboveground) before an inspection will take place. Failure to have the above requirements will result in a forfeited inspection.

Also, coordinating with other interested parties is crucial to pass your inspection. This would include, but is not limited to, alarm contractors, HVAC installers, construction supervisors, or facility maintenance personnel.

Q: How do I know if the fire inspector assigned to my inspection is currently certified in the State of Colorado.

A: You can check the status of any fire inspector at the DFS website.

Q: Do you perform annual “maintenance” inspections on sprinkler systems?

A: No. Although the DFS does perform annual life-safety inspections on all Public Schools and Casinos in the State of Colorado.

Local jurisdictions and/or other State agencies may conduct their own annual or maintenance inspections.

Q: Do you inspect fire alarms, commercial hood systems, or fire extinguishers.

A: In general no; but, we will inspect fire alarm components required and related to the fire suppression system.

The DFS will also inspect fire alarms for which we have been approved to provide “technical assistance” and have performed a formal plan review.

Keep in mind that fire alarms, fire extinguishers, and commercial cooking/hood systems are regulated by our Public School program so if the project involves a Colorado Public School then it will need to be submitted to the DFS.

Contractor Certification

Q: I currently service and install fire extinguishers, do I need a Suppression Contractor's certification?

A: No, the State of Colorado currently does not certify contractors for fire extinguishers, pre-engineered cooking (hood) systems, or fire alarms. It is important to check with local jurisdictions where you will be working as they may have their own certification process.

Q: Does the DFS certify companies or individual installers (pipe-fitters)?

A: The suppression contractor certification program registers the company or entity to perform fire suppression work in the State of Colorado. Individual installers must be affiliated with a registered company or entity.

UPDATE: Beginning July 1, 2011 individual installers (pipe-fitters) will be required to have a separate certification to perform suppression-related work in Colorado regardless of company/entity affiliation.

Q: I am a private citizen and want to install my own sprinkler system. Do I need to become a registered contractor with the State of Colorado.

A: No, current Suppression Rules do not regulate individual-installed sprinkler systems but the systems still need to be designed or engineered by a qualified person.

Q: I just got certified on July 1 of this year, how long is my certification good for?

A: All certifications (excluding inspector certification) are good for one (1) calendar year; January 1st to December 31st. In the example above, the contractor would have to recertify on or before December 31st to remain current.

Q: My company installs both sprinklers and backflow devices. Do I need a separate certification for each?

A: No, Suppression contractors who install (read: set the device) backflow devices, or install underground fire lines do not need a separate certification for each operation—the Suppression Certification covers those operations.

Suppression contractors that perform tests (i.e. maintenance, annual, acceptance) on backflow devices are required to obtain the Backflow Certification.

Contractors that only install/test backflow devices or underground fire lines require the Backflow and/or Underground Certifications respectively. These contractors cannot install, test, or maintain any aboveground fire sprinkler components.

Q: My main company office is located in a state outside Colorado, but I have regional offices in Colorado, Arizona, and Utah. Do I need to register each office?

A: Any office that designs and submits plans to a Colorado fire department or the DFS requires a separate certification. In the example above, each office would require a separate certification to submit plans to the DFS.

Q: Does the DFS offer any training opportunities to obtain a contractor certification?

A: Currently the DFS does not offer any formal training programs for fire suppression contractor or inspector certification.

There are many opportunities offered by third-party professional organizations such as the ICC, NFPA, NFSA, USFA, Local 669, and several other local agencies. The best approach is to ask your local fire department or search the Internet.

Q: I am a Master Plumber who wants to install a PEX pipe IRC P2904/NFPA 13D system in a single-family residence. Do I need to become certified?

A: Yes. All plumbers who install fire suppression systems or fire system components (i.e. backflow devices) require the applicable certification and are subject to the same fire suppression rules and program requirements.

UPDATE: Beginning on July 1, 2011, all multipurpose, shared-domestic water residential sprinkler systems conforming to the International Residential Code P2904 shall be under the purview and regulation of Colorado DORA.

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