

Fire Sprinklers

A. Maintenance, Inspection and Testing Requirements

Fire sprinkler systems must be inspected and tested *quarterly*. The inspection test consists of a full main drain test, assuring proper water supply and actuating the water flow alarm device, testing the tamper control valve switch and checking water pressure gauges. Additionally, a complete visual inspection of all sprinkler heads must be done *annually*. This must be performed by a licensed technician. Upon completion, the fire sprinkler riser must have an approved certification tag affixed to it. (See sample). (NFPA 25).

B. Common Problems & Solutions

1. *Problem:* Painted sprinkler heads. NFPA requires replacement of all sprinkler heads with any foreign material on their surface (paint, caulk, texture coating, etc.). (NFPA 25). In addition, the replacement of these heads can easily cost thousands of dollars, when this is a highly preventable occurrence.

Solution: Educating painters and maintenance personnel that the head must not receive any paint or paint overspray, thus potentially disabling the sprinkler head. Preventive measures, such as placing a baggie over each head while painting is highly recommended.

2. ***Problem:*** Sprinkler heads accidentally activated by residents.

Solution: Educating residents of the potential discharge of the heads if foreign objects, such as clothing, balloons, streamers, etc. are placed on or in contact with the head.

3. ***Problem:*** Water damage due to accidental activation of sprinkler head. Property managers and maintenance technicians are not properly trained and do not have a working knowledge of how to shut down the sprinkler system in a particular building.

Solution: Request the fire protection company to provide a training seminar for all staff *semi-annually*, to include silencing of alarms, shutting down the fire riser main control valve and contacting the fire sprinkler service company.