

NFPA® 13R

Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems in Low-Rise Residential Occupancies

2022 Edition



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An International Codes and Standards Organization

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Standard for the

Installation of Sprinkler Systems in Low-Rise Residential Occupancies

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This edition of NFPA 13R, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems in Low-Rise Residential Occupancies*, was prepared by the Technical Committee on Residential Sprinkler Systems and released by the Correlating Committee on Automatic Sprinkler Systems. It was issued by the Standards Council on March 18, 2021, with an effective date of April 8, 2021, and supersedes all previous editions.

This edition of NFPA 13R was approved as an American National Standard on April 8, 2021.

Origin and Development of NFPA 13R

The first edition of NFPA 13R, published in 1989, represented a milestone in the development of sprinkler installation design standards. The first edition resulted in a standard for the protection of low-rise residential facilities.

This standard is intended to provide a high degree of life safety and property protection to the inhabitants of low-rise multifamily dwellings. Promulgated as a document that provides for increased levels of protection to building occupants, the document also considers the economic aspects of a sprinklered facility as compared to an unsprinklered facility.

As the number of states and cities that implements sprinkler ordinances continues to grow, and as the threshold levels for sprinkler requirements in residential occupancies in the building codes extend to certain low-rise structures, it is believed that systems for certain residential occupancies can be installed efficiently and effectively in accordance with this standard.

The 1994 edition provided expanded information on nonmetallic pipe materials, made minor changes to clarify the established design criteria, and added a new recommendation on underground pipe materials.

The 1996 edition included several changes that paralleled amendments in the 1996 edition of NFPA 13, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems*. Other changes included a number of clarifications concerning the selection of sprinklers as well as the proper use of sprinklers.

The 1999 edition clarified criteria for nonmetallic pipe and fittings and established a minimum operating pressure for sprinklers. Guidance on providing freeze protection using insulation in attics and antifreeze systems was provided, as was information on the application of solvent cement for nonmetallic piping. Exceptions were added for omitting sprinkler coverage in closets, on balconies, and underneath garage doors.

The 2002 edition incorporated revisions to update the standard to comply with the 2000 edition of the *Manual of Style for NFPA Technical Committee Documents*. These revisions included rewording exceptions as requirements. The 2002 edition also included changes that further clarified the scope of the standard, established a minimum design discharge density, and added protection requirements specifically for garages. The section addressing spaces where sprinklers are permitted to be omitted was changed so that the area of full-height tub/shower enclosures would be included in the area determination for bathrooms, sprinklers would be provided in concealed spaces with fuel-fired equipment, and the omission of sprinklers in elevator machine rooms would not be dependent on the room's location.

The 2007 edition included spacing and obstruction rules addressing sloped ceilings, ceiling pockets, ceiling fans, and kitchen cabinets. Also, the requirements for using quick-response sprinklers within NFPA 13R regulations were clarified, and new requirements addressing architectural features in dwelling units were added. Additionally, the requirements covering closets, including obstructions within closets and protection of mechanical closets, were clarified. Finally,

new NFPA 13 requirements were added that apply to NFPA 13R to ensure proper administration of those requirements where relevant.

The 2010 edition was reorganized, dividing material on installation, discharge, plans and calculation, water supplies, acceptance testing, and care and maintenance into separate chapters. Clarification was provided in the Annex A material of Chapter 1 for assistance in determining when NFPA 13R applies and establishing that the building code defines the structure. NFPA 13R is used after such determination has been made. Further clarification was added stating that sprinklers are not required on balconies or balcony closets.

The 2013 edition revised the title to address low-rise residential occupancies instead of addressing the number of stories outlined in the document scope. Several sections were added to address the concept of shadow areas in different configurations within NFPA 13R protected structures. The requirements for locations of sprinklers were updated to provide specific direction on protection of porte cocheres, closets, and areas outside the dwelling unit. New language addressing the number of heads to be calculated for certain sloped and beamed ceiling configurations was added based on a Fire Protection Research Foundation report.

Several significant revisions were made during the development of the 2016 edition. The definition of sprinkler system was revised to correlate with NFPA 13 and NFPA 25. The Annex A text for the scope statement of the document was significantly revised to address mixed-use buildings and the applicability of NFPA 13R systems. Clarification was added that once a sprinkler is removed from a fitting or welded outlet it should not be reinstalled if torque was applied to the sprinkler itself. Nonmetallic piping compatibility language was updated for consistency with NFPA 13. The section addressing sprinkler protection outside dwelling units was reorganized and restructured to make it easier for the user to follow. Language was added to address sprinkler protection where the device is intended to protect a glazing assembly. One of the largest changes to the 2016 edition of NFPA 13R was the review of all metric conversions. Historically the document had used an “exact” conversion process, but in the 2016 edition an approximate conversion process was used. The intent of this change was to make the document more usable outside the United States.

The 2019 edition added a new definition for carport, as well as several new requirements that address where pipe and tube, listed for light hazard, can be used in an ordinary hazard application; beam rules for sprinklers installed under and adjacent to beams (along with new figures); waste and linen systems; installation of fuel-fired equipment; and obstructions in hallways.

Chapter 9, Water Supplies, was reorganized, and the domestic demand tables were moved from the annex to the body of the standard, and values were updated. In addition, new images clarifying sprinkler location and clearances needed around fireplaces were added.

The 2022 edition includes a revised method for determining when system components are subject to freezing and needing protection, which will require the use of current temperature data. Criteria for the protection of pipes or tubes from mechanical damage has been added to Chapter 5. Ceiling pocket protection criteria for quick-response sprinklers has been added to Chapter 6, and the obstruction tables have been modified for ease of use. A new section on system operational tests and main drain valves has been added to Chapter 10 for system acceptance. The Contractor’s Material and Test Certificate for Aboveground Piping has been relocated to Annex A. In addition, the fire data tables of A.1.2 have been updated with the most current information.

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This list represents the membership at the time the Committee was balloted on the final text of this edition. Since that time, changes in the membership may have occurred. A key to classifications is found at the back of the document.

NOTE: Membership on a committee shall not in and of itself constitute an endorsement of the Association or any document developed by the committee on which the member serves.

Committee Scope: This Committee shall have overall responsibility for documents that pertain to the criteria for the design and installation of automatic, open and foam-water sprinkler systems including the character and adequacy of water supplies, and the selection of sprinklers, piping, valves, and all materials and accessories. This Committee does not cover the installation of tanks and towers, nor the installation, maintenance, and use of

central station, proprietary, auxiliary, and local signaling systems for watchmen, fire alarm, supervisory service, nor the design of fire department hose connections.

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