



Steven Hirsch & Associates
Healthcare Management Support Systems

Spare Fire Sprinklers

By Steven Hirsch, MPA, FACHE

The Joint Commission recently made revision to their standard LS.02.01.35. "The hospital provides and maintains systems for extinguishing fires." EP7 states "At least six spare sprinkler heads of each type and temperature rating installed in the facility are readily available, with the associated wrench or tool to replace the sprinkler head. The spare sprinkler heads and wrench or tool are stored in a cabinet that does not exceed 100°F." This revision is consistent with the application of the CMS Life Safety Survey Guidelines and can be expected to be utilized during deemed status surveys conducted by DNV, HFAP, CIHQ, as well as TJC.

During Mock Surveys conducted by Steven Hirsch & Associates, many healthcare organizations have a significant supply of spare fire sprinklers; however, it is unknown whether the selection of spare fire sprinklers contains the minimum number of fire sprinklers required, based on the different types of devices that may be installed throughout the facility. An actual inventory of fire sprinklers needs to be compiled, in accordance with NFPA standards that have been adopted by accreditation agencies and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The hospital needs to follow the more stringent requirement as stated in the NFPA Code, to assure compliance with CMS regulatory expectations.

In accordance with NFPA 13, 2010 Edition, the organization is required to maintain a supply of spare fire sprinklers that includes all types and ratings installed based on the number of each type of fire sprinkler installed in the facility, as follows:

1. For protected facilities that have under 300 sprinklers – no fewer than 6 sprinklers.
2. For protected facilities having 300–1000 sprinklers – no fewer than 12 sprinklers.
3. For protected facilities having over 1,000 sprinklers – no fewer than 24 sprinklers.

One sprinkler wrench as specified by the sprinkler manufacturer is required to be provided in the cabinet for each type of fire sprinkler installed to be used for the removal and installation of fire sprinklers in the system.

An inventory list of the fire sprinklers installed in the property is required to be posted in the fire sprinkler cabinet. The list shall include the following information:

1. The sprinkler identification number (SIN if equipped); or the manufacturer, model, orifice, deflector type, thermal sensitivity, and pressure rating;
2. General description;
3. Quantity of each type to be contained in the cabinet; and
4. Issue or revision date of the list.

It is advised that each healthcare facility compile an inventory listing of each type of fire sprinkler installed, that includes the data listed above. Then, based on the numbers of each type of fire sprinklers installed, the facility will need to maintain an inventory of spare fire sprinkler heads based on the guidelines noted above.

While this has been enforced consistently during CMS surveys for some time, the accreditation agencies are expected for deemed status organizations, to enforce the Codes and Standards adopted by CMS. This will now include maintaining an inventory of fire sprinklers and a cache of spare devices. **Be sure that if there are competing standards and regulations, that your organization follows the most stringent requirements to assure compliance.**

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