

FIRE EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS' ASSOCIATION

Saving Lives, Protecting Property

April, 2012

CHAIN OF SURVIVAL



Call fire department; Announce fire/alert others; Make sure everyone is safe.



Defend in place



Fire/smoke alarm sounds



Suppression system activates



Sprinkler system activates



Fire department responds

Effective Advocacy in Texas Protects Extinguisher Licensing Program

When fire strikes, portable fire extinguishers are often the first line of defense for building occupants.

The fire safety community agrees that life safety is improved when building occupants are protected by multiple, redundant safeguards such as sprinkles, extinguishers and suppression systems. But the benefits of fire equipment are only realized when that equipment receives consistent and reliable inspection and maintenance from competent personnel, ensuring that the equipment is operable when it's needed most.

In 2010, the FEMA Government Relations Committee's (GRC) legislative monitoring system identified a bill filed in the Texas Legislature that would drastically change the state's successful fire protection licensing program. HB 979, An Act Relating to the Inspection of Portable Fire Extinguishers, would undermine the existing licensing program by allowing unlicensed 3rd parties to perform both the monthly quick check as well as servicing of portable fire extinguishers.

Upon identifying this bill, the GRC reached out to two critical stakeholders in the debate: the Fire Equipment Distributors of Texas (FEDOT), an association representing fifty fire equipment distributors, and the State Fire Marshal's office. Like the GRC, FEDOT and the State Fire Marshal's office were concerned that if HB 979 passed, it would effectively dismantle the state's licensing program – one which both parties were supportive of and believed to be successful.



GET INVOLVED!
Three Steps You Can Take to Help Protect the Industry. See back page.

“The FEMA GRC provided us with the resources and expertise necessary to aggressively fight harmful legislation in Texas. With the help of the GRC, our organization was able to execute an effective advocacy strategy that produced results at the State House and helped raise our profile statewide.”

—Phil Foster, President Fire Equipment Distributors of Texas (FEDOT)

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Fire Equipment Success Stories: Systems and Extinguishers at Work

The GRC publishes quarterly newsletters featuring fire equipment success stories from across the US. Our newsletters reach roughly 1,300 individuals in the fire protection and code community, including local and state fire marshals, fire chiefs, code officials, fire protection engineers and state legislators. Send us your extinguisher and system success stories for inclusion!



Kitchen Suppression System Prevents Damage or Injury in Cincinnati Museum

—*Cincinnati.com, Cincinnati, OH, Dec. 31, 2011*

When a deep fryer in the kitchen of the Cincinnati Museum Center sparked a grease fire, all of the building's 150 occupants were quickly evacuated. The Cincinnati Fire Department arrived on the scene to find that the fire had been completely extinguished by the kitchen's built-in extinguishers. The museum was able to reopen about an hour later.



Two Women Use Extinguisher on Grease Fire in Neighbor's Apartment

—*The Charlotte Observer, Mooresville, NC Jan. 08, 2012*

Robin Mattice was baking Christmas cookies with her mother, Shirley, on Dec. 20 when flames erupted in the apartment above theirs. The upstairs tenant, a young mother, ran down stairs to ask for help. Mattice and her mother called 911 then got an extinguisher out of the car and used it to douse the flames. Shirley opened windows in the upstairs apartment to draw out the smoke after the fire was extinguished. Mattice and her mom had the fire out before firefighters arrived, said Mooresville Fire Chief Wes Greene. No one in the house was injured according to Greene.



Professor and Student Extinguish Lab Fire

—*Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, Oakland, PA, Jan. 12, 2012*

A professor and student at Carnegie Mellon University were conducting some tests in the CMU campus chemistry lab on Wednesday January 11th. After completing the tests, they cleaned up, put one of the chemicals inside a container and placed the container in a plastic-lined cardboard box. Apparently some chemical residual on the container reacted with the liner or the cardboard, causing a fire to ignite. The professor and student used an extinguisher to put out the fire that burned the top of the cardboard box. There were no injuries and minimal damage.



Effective Advocacy in Texas

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The GRC and FEDOT worked closely in the following months to develop and implement an aggressive legislative advocacy strategy designed to defeat the bill. With extensive experience advocating on legislation in other states, and with the help of its lobbyist Rasky Baerlein, the GRC provided FEDOT with the strategic advice about how to best defeat this legislation. With FEDOT and their members' experience in the industry, they served as the prime opponent of the bill in the Texas Legislature – effectively communicating our shared message that this bill would reduce fire safety in Texas.

As a result of the GRC and FEDOT's swift action including identifying the bill as soon as it was filed, developing an effective messaging platform, and by making FEDOT the primary voice in opposition to this bill, we successfully convinced the bill's sponsor (also the Chairman of the legislative committee reviewing the bill) that the legislation was problematic and should not be approved. This resulted in the bill dying in committee and a new compromise bill (reached between FEDOT and the primary proponent of the legislation) was filed and passed.



Fire Equipment Manufacturers' Association 101

The Fire Equipment Manufacturers' Association is the premier trade association representing leading brands, and spanning dozens of product categories related to fire protection. The Fire Equipment Manufacturers' Association is comprised of four divisions represented by product categories: portable fire extinguishers, interior equipment, fire hose and pre-engineered suppression systems. These divisions work together in an effort to promote balanced fire protection, life safety and initial response when disaster strikes are our main concern. Members of the Fire Equipment Manufacturers' Association have formed a subgroup, the Government Relations Committee (GRC), comprised of representatives from Amerex Corporation, Brooks Equipment Co., and Buckeye Fire Equipment, to address legislative and regulatory issues relating to portable fire extinguishers and pre-engineered systems.

The GRC's main goals focus on helping to educate officials by advancing a balanced fire safety philosophy that reflects the need for both sprinklers and portable extinguishers. This newsletter is published periodically to communicate to key members of the fire services and code officials on the importance of balanced fire safety and the role that special application fire suppression systems and portable extinguishers play.

The FEMA Government Relations Committee: A Voice for the Industry

With updates to state fire codes happening regularly and a constant stream of proposed legislation and regulations affecting fire safety policies, stakeholders in the fire protection industry are greatly impacted by the legislative and regulatory process. Their level of engagement in these processes often determines whether or not their interests are promoted and protected.

The Fire Equipment Manufacturers' Association (FEMA) formed the Government Relations Committee (GRC) in 2003 to monitor and engage in legislative and regulatory issues relating to portable fire extinguishers and fire extinguishing systems. The committee—comprised of representatives from Amerex Corporation, Brooks Equipment Co. and Buckeye Fire Equipment—aims to educate officials and legislators about the importance of comprehensive fire safety policies. By monitoring state fire code adoptions and legislative and regulatory proposals, the GRC is able to engage in the conversation, providing both the industry's point of view and technical expertise in the debate. Through the GRC's efforts over the last seven years, the committee has successfully shaped public policy in numerous states to improve fire safety outcomes.



Get Involved!

Help Protect the Industry



- 1** Get in touch with a FEMA GRC member company about any legislation or regulation regarding changes to the state fire code or licensing requirements.
- 2** Build a relationship with your State Senator and State Representative; make them aware of legislative issues affecting your business.
- 3** Strengthen your relationships with local fire code officials, including local and state fire marshals; ask that they inform you of any upcoming proposals to revise the state fire code or regulations.



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1300 Sumner Ave., Cleveland, Oh 44115

Tel: 216-241-7333 Fax: 216-241-0105

fema@femalifesafety.org | www.femalifesafety.org