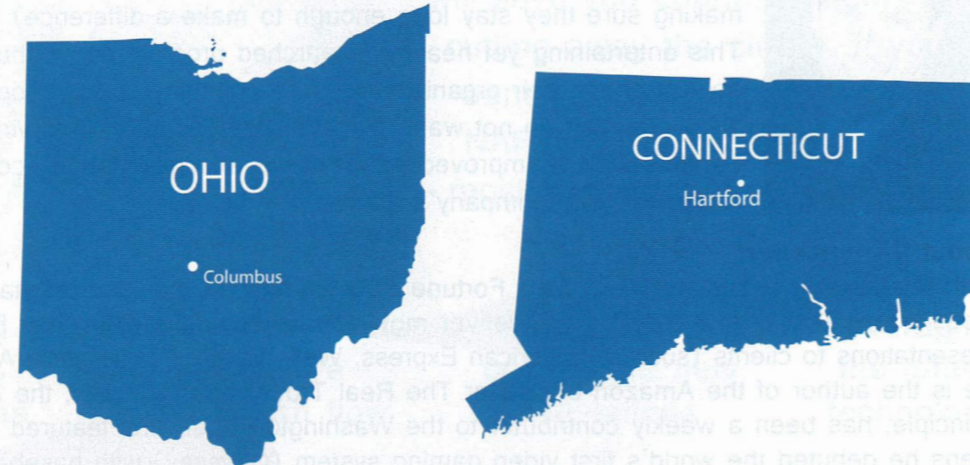


Fire Equipment Manufacturer's Association Government Relations Committee Legislative Report

Nearing Success in Connecticut

The Fire Equipment Manufacturer's Association's Government Relations Committee (FEMA GRC) is close to adding Connecticut as the latest state to increase its extinguisher requirements to meet model codes. Connecticut has among the weakest codes relating to extinguishers, it currently only requires portable extinguishers in special occupancies and not throughout most businesses, places of assembly, or schools. The FEMA GRC has advocated for the adoption of a model code requirement regarding extinguisher placement for three adoption cycles.

The culmination of our advocacy efforts were realized on December 29, 2017, when the Department of Administrative Services and the Office of the State Building Inspector, in conjunction with the Codes and Standards Committee and the Fire Prevention Committee, released updated drafts of the two fire codes. The draft language in the Fire Prevention Code requires extinguishers in new construction throughout the state, only excluding apartments and dormitories. Further, the Codes and Standards Committee deleted the current 906.1 Section from the Fire Safety Code and added language to ensure that there is no conflict with the new language in the Fire Prevention Code. With the public comment period ending in March, the draft codes will be sent to the Legislature's Regulatory Review Committee. The committee has until May 3, 2018, to take any action. If they do not take action, the regulations are then finalized with an adoption date of July 1, 2018.



The FEMA GRC will take proactive steps to ensure that states maintain a complete and balanced fire protection plan that will save lives and reduce property damage.

Ohio Considering Additional Extinguisher Requirements

The State of Ohio is moving forward with a proposal from the FEMA GRC to expand its extinguisher requirements to meet those required by the model codes. Ohio has historically had a divergence between the building code and the fire code, with the building code having an exception to the code that weakened extinguisher requirements in buildings equipped with quick-response sprinklers. The fire code did not contain that exception. This difference caused confusion which resulted in the state fire marshal moving to put the same exception into the newest version of the Ohio Fire Code.

Upon learning of this move, the FEMA GRC testified in opposition to the new fire code in November and urged the state fire marshal to remove the exception. The state fire marshal offered his support for the FEMA GRC proposal but urged us to focus on getting the exception removed first from the Ohio Building Code, as the fire code must match the building code.

The FEMA GRC quickly put forward a code change proposal for the building code, met with senior staff in the organization, and testified before the Ohio Board of Building Standards, which voted to approve the FEMA GRC proposal in December. The board is finalizing an updated building code which we hope will include our approved new language.

The FEMA GRC has since made a formal proposal to the fire code to remove the new exception language there as well.

Legislative Update

With the New Year being well underway, legislative sessions in forty-five states have begun, with twelve already concluding their 2018 sessions by the end of March, those being Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, West Virginia and Wyoming. Four states—Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, and Texas—do not have regular legislative sessions in 2018. More than twenty states, especially in the northeast, such as New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts, have two-year sessions. Ten states, including Alaska, California, Hawaii,

Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, have full-time legislators; which means that the legislature will meet throughout the year, even if the legislature is not in session. All other legislators are considered part-time because they only meet for a portion of the year. As always, we will focus our efforts on protecting and maintaining the fire protection standards we have already established in most states. The FEMA GRC will take proactive steps to ensure that states maintain a complete and balanced fire protection plan that will save lives and reduce property damage.

The FEMA GRC is monitoring the following proposed actions:

- A bill in Georgia could create a Fire Safety Advisory Board, which would

provide advice to the Fire Safety Commissioner on all matters.

- An Indiana legislator is seeking a prohibition on requiring sprinkler systems in class 2 structures.
- Legislation in New Hampshire calls for a committee to study the procedures regarding the adoption of national codes by the state.
- A bill in New Jersey wants a survey done on fire suppression systems currently installed in public and nonpublic school buildings.
- In Virginia, there is a proposal to transfer the primary authority for the adoption of the Statewide Fire Prevention Code from the Board of Housing and Community Development to the Virginia Fire Services Board. ❖

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