

LOG OF MEETING

DIRECTORATE FOR ENGINEERING SCIENCES

SUBJECT: Robert Northedge, Engineering Sciences, meeting with NFPA Committee on Electrical System Maintenance to discuss NFPA 73 model code, Residential Electrical Maintenance Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings, and to provide an update on CPSC project, Home Electrical System Fires; 12/7 & 8, 9:00 a.m. The meeting is an annual event.

DATE OF MEETING: December 7 & 8, 1995

PLACE: Grosvenor Resort hotel, 1850 Hotel Plaza Blvd, Orlando, Florida.

LOG ENTRY SOURCE: Robert L. Northedge

DATE OF ENTRY: December 12, 1995

COMMISSION ATTENDEES: Robert Northedge

NON COMMISSION ATTENDEES:

Committee Members

Donald Nissen, Underwriters Laboratories - Acting Committee Chairman

William Slater, RACO Inc.

L. Buie, Jr., Pettit & Pettit Consulting Engineers

Edward Charkey, American Insurance Services Group

Stephen Dyrnes, Institute of Electrical & Electronic Engineers

Dan Smits, AmeriSpec Home Insp - Pro Tech

Jack Wells, National Electrical Manufacturers Association

Dan White, The NY Board of Fire Underwriters

Guests

Kenyon Riches, Industrial Commercial Electronics

John Trolea, Edison Electric Institute - Future member

SUMMARY OF MEETING:

Mr. Northedge attended the open meeting of the Technical Committee on Electrical System Maintenance as a guest. The Technical Committee is responsible for maintaining the NFPA 73 Residential Electrical Maintenance Code for One- and Two-family Dwellings. During the meeting the committee heard two presentations, discussed and voted upon four comments submitted in response to previous committee proposals to change the NFPA 73 code and discussed expansion of the scope of the code.

Mr. Riches gave a presentation about his company's branch circuit tester. He explained its operation and why it would be appropriate to require specific circuit tests in the NFPA 73 code. Mr. Riches requested the committee to accept his previously submitted comment on a formal proposal made to the committee requesting a change to NFPA 73. Mr. Riches comment recommended that the formal proposal be changed to specify that

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receptacles be tested for proper wiring and that the tester indicate when the branch circuit conductors exceed 9 percent voltage drop at 15 amperes. After thorough discussion, the committee voted to reject Mr. Riches recommendation. However, the committee agreed to insert language in the code that supports the use of circuit analyzers as diagnostic tools.

Mr. Northedge gave the second presentation. He gave a status report on the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) project on Home Electrical Systems Fires. The project's main goal is to reduce electrical fires in homes by providing sufficient technical information to state jurisdictions so that local authorities can seek adoption of the NFPA 73 inspection code.

Mr. Northedge distributed copies of CPSC's latest report, released October 12, 1995, on residential fires entitled, *1993 Residential Fire Loss Estimates*. The report indicates that for 1993, an estimated 43,300 residential fires resulted from the electrical distribution system in residences, causing an estimated 330 deaths, 1,720 injuries and 688.8 million in property loss.

The committee discussed expansion of the scope of the code to include: multifamily dwellings, mobile homes, recreational vehicles, floating dwellings, and residential swimming pools. The committee decided not to seek a change in the scope of the code at this time. The committee did establish three task groups to study expansion of scope - one task group covering mobile homes, another covering floating dwellings, and a third on residential swimming pools. For multi-family dwellings, the committee recognizes that the provisions of the code for one- and two-family dwellings are not complete. However, since the existing code provisions could be applied to multi-family dwellings to remove many hazards, the committee decided to include a note in the code indicating that the provisions contained in this code can be applicable to multi-family dwellings. The committee decided to take no action with regard to recreational vehicles.

Finally, the committee requested Mr. Northedge to provide the committee the following:

Copy of the model legislation to require an electrical inspection of older residences based on NFPA 73. CPSC prepared the model legislation and submitted it to The Council of State Governments in March 1995.

Data on the distribution of electrical fires in mobile homes, one- and two-family dwellings and multi-family dwellings.

The committee expects the second edition of the NFPA 73 code to be issued July 1996. The committee left open the next meeting date.