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LOG OF MEETING
DIRECTORATE FOR ENGINEERING SCIENCES

SUBJECT: Home Electrical System Fires Project and the new Residential Electrical Maintenance Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings, NFPA 73.

PLACE: Office of Fire Prevention and Control conference room, 12th floor, 41 State Street, Albany, NY.

DATE OF MEETING: October 4, 1994

DATE OF ENTRY: October 14, 1994

SOURCE OF ENTRY: Robert L. Northedge

COMMISSION ATTENDEE: Robert L. Northedge, Engineering Sciences

NON-COMMISSION ATTENDEES:

Francis A. McGarry, Chairman, Fire Prevention Code Council Subcommittee
 Albert J. Reed, Vice President, NY Board of Fire Underwriters
 Dan White, Br Manager Buffalo Div, NY Board of Fire Underwriters
 Richard W. Duncanson, Sr. Fire Inspector, City of Middletown
 Roy Scott, DOS - Codes Division
 John MacDonald, International Masonry Institute
 Sandra DuGosser, NYSBA
 Herbert R. Martin, Code Council member
 John Flanigan, Town of Bethlehem - Fire Code Commission
 Gunnar L. Neilson, Town of Ossining - Building Fire
 Robert Brunner, Code Council member
 William W. Ryan, Br Manager Albany Div, NY Board of Fire Underwriters

SUMMARY

Mr. Northedge's purposes for attending the meeting were to inform the Fire Prevention subcommittee of CPSC's fire-safety initiatives for older homes in need of electrical maintenance and to explain how the NFPA 73 maintenance code can help to improve electrical-fire safety.

The subcommittee chairman, Mr. McGarry, opened the meeting by discussing the NFPA 73 Residential Electrical Maintenance Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings. The chairman explained that he had received a letter from Art Smith of the New York Board of Fire Underwriters. Mr. Smith requested that the subcommittee initiate the process required to incorporate the NFPA 73 code into the New York State Uniform Fire Prevention Code.

Mr. Reed explained the benefits that could be gained from using the NFPA code for inspecting older homes. He further

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explained the electrical inspection process now used by the New York Board of Fire Underwriters. When asked how the Board of Fire Underwriters would handle a large increase in inspection requests, Mr. Reed explained that additional inspectors would be hired. He also added that the cost of an inspection would drop significantly.

Mr. Northedge provided statistics on electrical wiring fires to the subcommittee. In addition, he presented an overview of the Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) activities to address these fires in older homes. He also explained the origin of the NFPA 73 code and the application of the code to identify various wiring problems that cause electrical wiring fires in older homes. Mr. Northedge gave the attendees a document containing a summary of CPSC's project activities to reduce electrical wiring fires.

The subcommittee chairman called for a vote on a proposal to incorporate the NFPA 73 code into the New York State Uniform Fire Prevention Code. The vote was unanimous in favor of the proposal. The subcommittee agreed that the issue of enforcement would be worked out by the "authorities having jurisdiction." The proposal will be forwarded to the New York State Code Council. If the Code Council agrees with the subcommittee proposal the Council will request public comments and hold hearings.

With regard to a future subcommittee issue, the chairman introduced the subject of window bars for preventing children from falling from windows. He requested that the subcommittee consider the fire-safety issues involved. The issue will be discussed at a future subcommittee meeting.