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Administration

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Knowledge Objectives

- Explain the purpose, nature, and philosophy of NFPA 921 and NFPA 1033.
- Discuss the importance of National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) process for developing documents.

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Introduction (1 of 3)

- NFPA 921, *Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigations*
 - Used by those who investigate and analyze fire and explosion incidents

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Introduction (2 of 3)

- People involved in fire investigation include:
 - On-scene investigators
 - Fire analysts
 - Other experts with special areas of interest
 - Technicians who analyze evidence

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Introduction (3 of 3)

- NFPA 1033, *Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigator*
 - Contains minimum job performance requirements (JPRs) for fire investigator
 - The present book cites applicable JPRs at the start of each chapter.

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NFPA 921 (1 of 3)

- Developed by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
- Approved by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI)
- NFPA considers NFPA 921 a *guide*.

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NFPA 921 (2 of 3)

- Many courts and professional organizations consider it a *standard*.
- Not intended to be comprehensive
- Provides systematic, working framework for investigation and analysis

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NFPA 921 (3 of 3)

- Fire investigator may have to use additional resources

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Relevance of NFPA 921 to Fire Investigators (1 of 2)

- Distinction between *standard* and *guide* is important
- No “shall” or “must”-type language is included.
- Yet NFPA 921 is often considered a de facto standard.

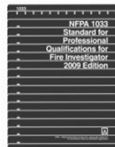
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Relevance of NFPA 921 to Fire Investigators (2 of 2)

- Investigator does not have to use NFPA 921 at every investigation
 - Use his or her own judgment to determine appropriate steps
 - Explain the alternative method used
- NFPA 921 does not cover everything.
 - Updates are ongoing

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NFPA 1033



- Nationally applicable performance standards
- Applies to fire investigators only
- Updated regularly

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Relevance of NFPA 1033 to Fire Investigators (1 of 3)

- Unlike NFPA 921, NFPA 1033 *is* a standard.
- Provides minimum JPRs for service as fire investigator.
- Specifies:
 - Minimum knowledge and skills
 - How to conduct and document investigation

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Relevance of NFPA 1033 to Fire Investigators (2 of 3)

- Also addresses:
 - Evidence collection
 - Interviewing witnesses
 - Report writing
 - Final presentation of investigative findings

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Relevance of NFPA 1033 to Fire Investigators (3 of 3)

- Applicable to all fire investigations
 - Wildland fires
 - Vehicle fires
 - Structural fires
- Jurisdictions can enforce requirements exceeding those in NFPA 1033

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Qualifications for Fire Investigators (1 of 3)

- NFPA 1033 requires a fire investigator to:
 - Be at least 18 years old
 - Posses a high school diploma or equivalent
 - Pass a thorough background and character investigation
 - Meet the JPRs established in NFPA 1033

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Qualifications for Fire Investigators (2 of 3)

- Investigators must also meet requirements:
 - Of their employer
 - Established by law
- Training, and periodic evaluation, are required.

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Qualifications for Fire Investigators (3 of 3)

Fire Investigators must be evaluated periodically to ensure they meet all requirements established by NFPA 1033 and the laws in their jurisdiction



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Roles and Responsibilities of Fire Investigators (1 of 3)

- After initial training, investigator must remain current on:
 - Fire science
 - Fire chemistry
 - Thermodynamics
 - Thermometry

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Roles and Responsibilities of Fire Investigators (2 of 3)

- After initial training, investigator must remain current on:
 - Fire dynamics
 - Explosion dynamics
 - Computer fire modeling
 - Fire investigation

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Roles and Responsibilities of Fire Investigators (3 of 3)

- After initial training, investigator must remain current on:
 - Fire analysis
 - Fire investigation methodology and technology
 - Hazardous materials
 - Failure analysis and analytical tools

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Development of NFPA Documents

- NFPA documents are voluntary documents.
 - No power of law unless an AHJ adopts them
- Developed through a consensus process
 - Brings together volunteers in technical committees
 - Varying viewpoints and interests are represented.

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Technical Committees (1 of 2)

- More than 6000 volunteers on over 200 committees
- Membership categories for a committee:
 - Manufacturer
 - User
 - Installer/maintainer
 - Labor representative

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Technical Committees (2 of 2)

- Membership categories for a committee:
 - Enforcing authority
 - Insurance representative
 - Special expert
 - Consumer
 - Applied research/testing laboratory

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Oversight of Technical Committees

- NFPA staff members:
 - Ensure that committees follow rules
 - Record meeting actions
 - Coordinate publication of reports and final documents
- All meetings are open to the public.

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Revision Cycles (1 of 2)

- Documents are updated on regular basis.
- NFPA 921 is revised every 3 years.
- NFPA 1033 is revised every 5 years.

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Revision Cycles (2 of 2)

- Steps of revision cycle:
 - Call for Proposals
 - Report on Proposals
 - Report on Comments
 - Technical Committee Report Session
 - Standards Council Issuance

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Corrections to Documents

- Between revisions, NFPA may issue:
 - Errata (corrections of errors in a document)
 - Temporary Interim Amendments (TIAs)
- Several errata and TIAs have been issued for NFPA 921.

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Formal Interpretation of Codes and Standards

- Formal interpretation (FI) provides explanation of any provision in an NFPA code or standard.
- FIs are processed through technical committees.
- Committee gives a “yes” or “no” answer to an FI

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NFPA 921 Definitions

- Provide a consistent language for all fire investigators
 - Without consistent language, misunderstandings may arise.
 - For example, *backdraft* and *flashover* are often confused.
- This textbook uses NFPA 921 definitions.

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Summary (1 of 5)

- NFPA 921 establishes guidelines and recommendations for the safe and systematic investigation or analysis of fire and explosion incidents.

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Summary (2 of 5)

- NFPA 1033 is a standard that is designed to establish the minimum JPRs for service as a fire investigator. It establishes the minimum knowledge and skills required for a fire investigator to evaluate a fire scene and specifies how to conduct and document the scene safely.

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Summary (3 of 5)

- A standard is a document in which the main text contains only mandatory provisions and is in a form that is generally suitable for adoption into law, assuming the AHJ adopts it. An example of a standard is NFPA 1033.

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Summary (4 of 5)

- A guide is a document that is advisory or informatory and that contains nonmandatory provisions. The document is not suitable for adoption into law. An example of a guide is NFPA 921.

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Summary (5 of 5)

- NFPA documents do not have the power of law unless an AHJ adopts them.
- Most NFPA revision cycles have five distinct steps: Call for Proposals, Report of Proposals, Report on Comments, Technical Committee Report Session, and Standards Council Issuance.