

MAF FIRE

for a safer world

NFPA Codes & Standards

A Practical Guide for Building Owners,
Consultants and Facility Managers

Fire Protection | Life Safety | Compliance

www.maffire.com

Edition: October 2026

What is NFPA?

NFPA codes are the world's most widely used rules for preventing fire, protecting people and keeping fire safety systems working when they are needed. They are published by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), a non-profit organisation founded in 1896 in the United States.

NFPA publishes more than 300 codes and standards. Each is identified by a number (for example, NFPA 13 for sprinklers) and is revised on a regular cycle, usually every three years. They are written by technical committees of engineers, manufacturers, insurers, fire services and regulators.

Code or standard? A *code* says what must be done and when (for example, which buildings need sprinklers). A *standard* says how to do it (for example, how to design and install those sprinklers). Authorities often adopt a code, which then points to the standards.

Key NFPA codes at a glance

The NFPA documents most often referenced for buildings, fire protection systems and life safety.

Code	Title	What it covers	Category
NFPA 1	Fire Code	Overall fire prevention rules for buildings, processes and hazardous materials	General fire code
NFPA 4	Integrated Fire Protection & Life Safety System Testing	Testing how fire systems work together	Testing
NFPA 10	Portable Fire Extinguishers	Selection, placement, inspection and maintenance of extinguishers	Extinguishers
NFPA 11	Low-, Medium- & High-Expansion Foam	Foam systems for flammable liquid hazards	Suppression
NFPA 12	Carbon Dioxide Extinguishing Systems	CO2 total-flooding and local-application systems	Suppression
NFPA 13	Installation of Sprinkler Systems	Design and installation of automatic sprinklers	Sprinklers
NFPA 13D / 13R	Sprinklers in Dwellings / Low-Rise Residential	Sprinkler rules for homes and low-rise residential	Sprinklers
NFPA 14	Standpipe and Hose Systems	Standpipes and hose connections for firefighting	Water-based
NFPA 15	Water Spray Fixed Systems	Water spray for transformers, tanks and conveyors	Suppression
NFPA 17 / 17A	Dry / Wet Chemical Extinguishing Systems	Chemical systems, incl. commercial kitchen hoods	Suppression
NFPA 20	Stationary Fire Pumps	Fire pump selection, installation and controllers	Water supply
NFPA 22	Water Tanks for Private Fire Protection	Fire water storage tanks	Water supply
NFPA 24	Private Fire Service Mains	Underground mains and hydrants on private property	Water supply
NFPA 25	ITM of Water-Based Systems	Inspection, testing and maintenance of sprinklers, pumps, tanks	Maintenance
NFPA 30	Flammable and Combustible Liquids Code	Storage, handling and use of flammable liquids	Hazardous materials
NFPA 54 / 58	Fuel Gas Code / LP-Gas Code	Natural gas and LPG installations	Fuel gas
NFPA 70	National Electrical Code (NEC)	Safe electrical installation	Electrical

Code	Title	What it covers	Category
NFPA 70E	Electrical Safety in the Workplace	Protecting workers from shock and arc flash	Electrical
NFPA 72	National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code	Fire alarm, detection, notification and voice evacuation	Detection & alarm
NFPA 80	Fire Doors and Other Opening Protectives	Fire doors, shutters and fire windows	Passive protection
NFPA 90A	Air-Conditioning and Ventilating Systems	Fire safety of HVAC systems and dampers	HVAC
NFPA 92	Smoke Control Systems	Design and testing of smoke control	Smoke control
NFPA 96	Commercial Cooking Operations	Kitchen exhaust hoods, ducts and fire protection	Kitchens
NFPA 99	Health Care Facilities Code	Fire and life safety in hospitals and clinics	Occupancy
NFPA 101	Life Safety Code	Exits, egress, emergency lighting, occupant protection	Life safety
NFPA 110	Emergency and Standby Power Systems	Generators supporting life safety systems	Emergency power
NFPA 130	Fixed Guideway Transit and Passenger Rail	Fire safety for metros and rail	Transport
NFPA 241	Construction, Alteration and Demolition	Fire safety on construction sites	Construction
NFPA 750	Water Mist Fire Protection Systems	Water mist system design and installation	Suppression
NFPA 2001	Clean Agent Fire Extinguishing Systems	Gaseous systems for server rooms, archives, control rooms	Suppression

The core codes explained

NFPA 10 – Portable fire extinguishers

Sets which extinguisher type suits each hazard, how many are needed and where they go. Fires are grouped into classes: A (ordinary combustibles), B (flammable liquids and gases), C (energised electrical), D (combustible metals) and K (cooking oils). Extinguishers need a monthly visual check, annual maintenance and periodic hydrostatic testing.

NFPA 13 – Sprinkler systems

The main standard for designing and installing automatic sprinklers. It classifies spaces by hazard (light, ordinary, extra hazard and storage) and sets water density, sprinkler spacing, pipe sizing and water supply. Properly designed sprinklers control most fires before they spread.

NFPA 25 – Keeping water-based systems working

Covers inspection, testing and maintenance of sprinklers, standpipes, fire pumps, tanks and hydrants after installation, with weekly, monthly, quarterly, annual and five-yearly tasks such as weekly fire pump churn tests and five-year internal pipe inspections.

NFPA 72 – Fire alarm and detection

Governs smoke and heat detectors, manual call points, control panels, sounders, strobes and voice evacuation systems, including design, installation, testing and maintenance frequencies.

NFPA 101 – Life Safety Code

Focuses on getting people out safely: the number, width and travel distance of exits, exit signs, emergency lighting, fire-rated separations and occupancy-specific rules for offices, malls, hotels, schools and hospitals.

NFPA 20 – Fire pumps

Covers the pumps that boost water pressure for sprinklers and standpipes, including electric and diesel drivers, controllers, jockey pumps and acceptance testing.

NFPA 2001 – Clean agent systems

Applies to gaseous systems that extinguish fire without water or residue, protecting data centres, control rooms, archives and telecom rooms. It sets agent quantity, enclosure integrity testing and occupant safety.

NFPA 96 – Commercial kitchens

Covers kitchen hoods, grease ducts, exhaust fans and the wet chemical systems that protect cooking appliances, and sets how often grease ducts must be cleaned based on cooking volume.

NFPA in the UAE and the Middle East

In the UAE, the legally binding document is the **UAE Fire and Life Safety Code of Practice**, issued by UAE Civil Defence. It draws heavily on NFPA standards and often refers to them directly for system design, installation and maintenance.

- **Dubai Civil Defence** and the other emirates' civil defence authorities approve designs, inspect installations and license fire safety contractors.
- Systems and products usually need Civil Defence approval, and often listings such as UL or FM, in addition to NFPA compliance.
- Projects across Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain and Kuwait often specify NFPA standards alongside local codes such as the Saudi Building Code.

Where local code and NFPA differ, the local authority's requirement applies.

Frequently asked questions

Are NFPA codes mandatory?

Only where a government or authority adopts them. In the UAE, the Civil Defence code is mandatory and it references NFPA. Insurers and clients may also require NFPA compliance by contract.

Which NFPA code applies to fire extinguishers?

NFPA 10.

Which NFPA code covers sprinkler installation?

NFPA 13 for design and installation, and NFPA 25 for inspection, testing and maintenance afterwards.

Which NFPA code covers fire alarms?

NFPA 72, the National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code.

How often should fire systems be inspected?

It depends on the system. NFPA 25 and NFPA 72 set weekly to five-yearly tasks; extinguishers need monthly visual checks and annual maintenance under NFPA 10. Local authorities may require more frequent checks.

Which system protects a server room?

Usually a clean agent system under NFPA 2001, often combined with early smoke detection under NFPA 72.

Where can I read the codes?

NFPA offers free read-only access to its current codes at nfpa.org after registration. Full copies can be purchased from NFPA.

How MAF Fire can help

MAF Fire designs, supplies, installs and maintains fire protection and life safety systems in line with NFPA standards and local Civil Defence requirements. Contact our team for a site survey, system design or a maintenance contract.

www.maffire.com | for a safer world

Disclaimer: This guide is general information only. NFPA codes are revised regularly; always check the current edition adopted by your local authority and consult a qualified fire protection professional before design or installation. NFPA and the NFPA code names are trademarks of the National Fire Protection Association. MAF Fire is not affiliated with or endorsed by NFPA.