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DIVISION OF CODES AND STANDARDS
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INFORMATION BULLETIN 2001-04 (MH)

TO: **Manufactured Home Manufacturers**
 Manufactured Home Dealers
 Manufactured Home Salespersons
 Department-Approved Third-Party Agencies (MH)
 Manufactured Housing Interested Parties
 City and County Building Officials
 Mobilehome Park Owners
 Division Staff

SUBJECT: NEW REGULATIONS FOR THE DESIGN AND INSTALLATION OF FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEMS IN MANUFACTURED HOMES AND MULTI-UNIT MANUFACTURED HOUSING WITH TWO DWELLING UNITS

On January 17, 2001, new Department of Housing and Community Development regulations were approved by the Office of Administrative Law, and filed by the Secretary of State establishing preemptive requirements for the design and installation of fire sprinkler systems for new and used manufactured homes and multi-unit manufactured housing containing two dwelling units¹.

Manufactured homes and multi-unit manufactured homes are currently constructed and installed under preemptive state and federal construction standards. These standards, however, do not address the installation of fire sprinkler systems. The lack of uniform standards subjects the construction of manufactured homes and multi-unit manufactured homes to various city and county rules and ordinances and with differing degrees of enforcement. These differences interfere with a key component of a manufactured home's affordability: use of a standardized factory-built procedure.

¹ "Multi-unit manufactured housing with two dwelling units" is defined in Health and Safety Code Section 18008.7(a). These fire sprinkler regulations do not apply to multi-unit manufactured homes containing more than two dwelling units.

The new regulations will provide preemptive state requirements for the plan approval, inspection, testing and installation of fire sprinkler systems, but do not, by themselves, mandate the installation of fire sprinklers in manufactured homes or multi-unit manufactured homes with two dwelling units.

These new regulations will become operative for all manufactured home units designed for fire sprinkler systems that are offered for sale, rent or lease in California entering production on and after May 17, 2001.

Application And Scope:

The new regulations establish comprehensive requirements for the installation of fire sprinkler systems in manufactured homes and in multi-unit manufactured housing with two dwelling units and apply only when either fire sprinkler systems are required by the local government or authority having jurisdiction over any fire sprinkler system installation in any residential unit that could be built on the same site, or where the purchaser, dealer or owner elects to install a fire sprinkler system in a new or existing manufactured home or multi-unit manufactured home with two dwelling units located in California.

The regulations preempt all other local requirements that establish standards for the design and installation of a fire sprinkler system in a manufactured home and in the dwelling unit(s) of a multi-unit manufactured home with two dwelling units.

It will be unlawful for any person to sell, offer for sale, rent or lease a manufactured home or multi-unit manufactured home containing two dwelling units if the fire sprinkler system will not operate properly due to inadequate water pressure at the site of installation.

The new regulations establish specific standards for types of materials, installation instructions, construction methods and workmanship, information labels and testing requirements.

Standards, Plan Review And Inspection Procedures For New Homes:

The regulations adopt, with amendments, the NFPA 13D "Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems in One and Two Family Dwellings and Manufactured Homes", 1999 Edition, as published by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

While manufacturers of manufactured housing units obtain design and inspection approval of the of manufactured homes constructed under the Federal (HUD) regulations, through oversight by HUD-approved third-party agencies (IPIAs and DAPIAs), the design and inspection approval of fire sprinkler systems installed in new manufactured homes for sale in California will be in accordance with state law and regulations and through Department-approved Design Approval Agencies (DAAs) and Quality Assurance Agencies (QAAs) Design Approval Agencies.

Department-approved DAAs and QAAs are authorized to provide plan review and in-plant inspection approval of fire sprinkler systems installed in new manufactured housing units and multi-unit manufactured housing with two dwelling units for sale in California.

Prior to shipment of a home containing a fire sprinkler system, the factory is required to affix a "Fire Sprinkler System Information and Installer Certification" label inside the unit that provides detailed information for the on-site installer and homeowner use. The label is required to be affixed on an inside wall or door of the water heater compartment.

A fire sprinkler system installed in a factory is required to be tested at 100 psi hydrostatic pressure for 2 hours at the manufacturing facility and for an additional 1 hour hydrostatic test at the home installation site.

Fire Sprinkler Systems Installations Added To Existing Homes:

The installation of a fire sprinkler system in an existing manufactured home or multi-unit manufactured home with two dwelling units requires prior design approval from the Department, and Department inspection approval of the installation prior to the installer covering the piping material within finished wall or ceiling materials.

Only the occupant homeowner or a fire protection contractor holding a valid C-16 license may install a fire sprinkler system in an existing manufactured home or multi-unit manufactured home with two dwelling units.

In order for a fire sprinkler system to operate properly, a minimum of 15 pounds of water pressure per square inch is required at the home water supply connection.

The new regulations are contained within Title 25, California Code of Regulations (25CCR) Chapter 3, commencing with Section 4300, and will be available either through Barclay's Law Publishers, at 1-800-888-3600, or through the Internet at <http://www.oal.ca.gov/>. Anyone having questions concerning the manufactured housing fire sprinkler regulations may contact Richard Weinert, Manufactured Housing Program Manager, at (916) 327-2838.

Sincerely,

Norman Sorensen
Deputy Director