

NFPA®

1201

Standard for
Providing Fire and
Emergency Services to the Public

2020



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NFPA® 1201

Standard for

Providing Fire and Emergency Services to the Public

2020 Edition

This edition of NFPA 1201, *Standard for Providing Fire and Emergency Services to the Public*, was prepared by the Technical Committee on Emergency Service Organization Risk Management. It was issued by the Standards Council on November 4, 2019, with an effective date of November 24, 2019, and supersedes all previous editions.

This edition of NFPA 1201 was approved as an American National Standard on November 24, 2019.

Origin and Development of NFPA 1201

Sections of this document were developed by the Committee on Fire Department Organization and adopted by NFPA on a tentative basis in 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, and 1967. In 1968, the entire document was adopted as NFPA 4B, *Recommendations for Management of a Fire Department*. The document was revised, renumbered, and retitled as NFPA 4, *Organization for Fire Services*, in 1971. In 1977, the document was completely revised and renumbered as NFPA 1201.

The 1984 edition, retitled *Recommendations for the Organization for Fire Services*, was a complete revision that incorporated new chapters on emergency management and emergency medical services. At the same time, the existing 13 chapters were reorganized into 18 chapters.

The Technical Committee on Public Fire Service Organization and Operations revised the 1994 edition from a recommended practice to a standard. The chapters were expanded to include updated material that was important to fire department organizations, and the appendix material was expanded to include additional explanatory material.

The 2000 edition of NFPA 1201, with the new title *Standard for Developing Fire Protection Services for the Public*, was a reconfirmation of the 1994 edition. In 1997, NFPA's Standards Council had disbanded the Technical Committee on Public Fire Service Organization and Operations and assigned the project to a new technical committee. The Technical Committee on Emergency Service Organization Risk Management reviewed the 1994 edition and felt that the material contained was still relevant to fire departments. Concurrently, the two new fire service organization and deployment committees (the Technical Committee on Fire and Emergency Service Organization and Deployment — Career and the Technical Committee on Fire and Emergency Service Organization and Deployment — Volunteer) were developing documents that would address fire department issues, especially deployment capabilities, contained in NFPA 1201. Because the proposed documents were under development, the technical committee determined not to revise NFPA 1201 but to hold it in place until the two new technical committees could finish their work.

The 2004 edition was rewritten to comply with the *Manual of Style for NFPA Technical Committee Documents* and to update appropriate material. The title of the document was changed to *Standard for Providing Emergency Services to the Public* to better reflect the contents of the standard.

The 2010 edition moved code enforcement from Section 5.2 to a new Chapter 6. Items dealing with how to implement certain requirements were moved to Annex A. The word “fire” was added back into the title.

In the 2015 edition, instances where the technical committee referred to the “authority having jurisdiction” (AHJ) were changed to refer to the “governing authorities” of a jurisdiction. The committee also changed the term *risk assessment* to *community risk reduction* to prepare for timely and sufficient coverage of incidents. In Chapter 8, requirements were added for jurisdictions to submit all incident reporting data to the appropriate state, provincial, and national reporting systems.

For the 2020 edition of NFPA 1201, the committee revised Chapter 4, Governance and Administration, and added requirements. The requirement for projecting future emergency service needs was altered from 20 years to 10 years to align with accepted practice for master planning. A requirement was added to identify company staffing models as part of intercommunity organization. The committee also updated references, extracts, and definitions.

Technical Committee on Emergency Service Organization Risk Management

Adam K. Thiel, *Chair*
City of Philadelphia, PA [E]

David R. Blossom, Amerisure Insurance, FL [I]
Paul H. Boecker, III, Illinois Public Risk Fund, IL [I]
John L. Cochran, Washington, DC [SE]
Mark Docherty, Sterling Heights Fire Department, MI [L]
Rep. International Association of Fire Fighters
Sean David Douglas, Claremore Fire Department, OK [E]
Keith S. Frangiamore, Fire Safety Consultants, Inc., IL [SE]
Hugh H. Gibson, IV, Verisk Analytics/Insurance Services Office, Inc., NJ [I]
Walter Groden, AIG Global Technical Office, NY [I]
Terry-Dawn Hewitt, McKenna Hewitt, CO [SE]
Michael J. Hopmeier, Unconventional Concepts, Inc., FL [SE]
William F. Jenaway, Volunteer Firemen's Insurance Services, Inc., PA [I]

Dean R. Larson, Larson Performance Consulting, IN [SE]
Jeffrey T. Lindsey, University of Florida, FL [SE]
Thomas Randall MacKay, The Arizona Fire & Medical Authority, AZ [E]
Joseph McNulty, Baltimore City Fire Department, MD [E]
Richard L. Merrell, Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Department, VA [U]
Kenneth A. Pravetz, City of Virginia Beach Fire Department, VA [E]
Ronald W. Richards, Task Force 1, Inc., PA [SE]
Kelli J. Scarlett, Souderton, PA [SE]
David G. N. Stonhill, Battelle Energy Alliance (BEA), ID [U]
Brad W. Tadlock, Hilton Head Island Fire & Rescue, SC [E]
Donald H. J. Turno, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC, SC [U]

Alternates

Scott Harkins, Glatfelter Insurance Group, Inc., PA [I]
(Alt. to William F. Jenaway)
Tim Hill, Professional Fire Fighters of Arizona, AZ [L]
(Alt. to Mark Docherty)

John F. Sullivan, City of Worcester Fire Department, MA [E]
(Voting Alt.)

Michael T. Wixted, NFPA Staff Liaison

This list represents the membership at the time the Committee was balloted on the final text of this edition. Since that time, changes in the membership may have occurred. A key to classifications is found at the back of the document.

NOTE: Membership on a committee shall not in and of itself constitute an endorsement of the Association or any document developed by the committee on which the member serves.

Committee Scope: This Committee shall have primary responsibility for documents on emergency service organizations structure, operations, and risk management.

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NFPA 1201

Standard for

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NOTICE: An asterisk (*) following the number or letter designating a paragraph indicates that explanatory material on the paragraph can be found in Annex A.

A reference in brackets [] following a section or paragraph indicates material that has been extracted from another NFPA document. Extracted text may be edited for consistency and style and may include the revision of internal paragraph references and other references as appropriate. Requests for interpretations or revisions of extracted text shall be sent to the technical committee responsible for the source document.

Information on referenced and extracted publications can be found in Chapter 2 and Annex B.

Chapter 1 Administration

1.1* Scope. This standard contains requirements on the structure and operations of fire and emergency service organizations (FESOs).

1.2* Purpose. This standard is intended for the use and guidance of persons charged with providing fire and emergency services to protect lives, property, critical infrastructure, and the environment from the effects of hazards (e.g., fire, medical emergency, hazardous materials, natural disaster, and community infrastructure disruption).

1.3* Application. This standard addresses the structure of fire and emergency service systems and organizations involved with the delivery of fire and emergency services that serve a defined area and are generally under the auspices of a governing authority.

1.4* Equivalency. Nothing in this standard is intended to prevent the use of systems, methods, or devices of equivalent or superior quality, strength, fire resistance, effectiveness, durability, and safety over those prescribed by this standard.

1.4.1 Technical documentation shall be submitted to the authority having jurisdiction to demonstrate equivalency.

1.4.2 The system, method, or device shall be approved for the intended purpose by the authority having jurisdiction.

Chapter 2 Referenced Publications

2.1 General. The documents or portions thereof listed in this chapter are referenced within this standard and shall be considered part of the requirements of this document.

2.2 NFPA Publications. National Fire Protection Association, 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169-7471.

NFPA 101®, *Life Safety Code*®, 2018 edition.

NFPA 1221, *Standard for the Installation, Maintenance, and Use of Emergency Services Communications Systems*, 2019 edition.

NFPA 1500™, *Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety, Health, and Wellness Program*, 2020 edition.

NFPA 1561, *Standard on Emergency Services Incident Management System and Command Safety*, 2020 edition.

NFPA 1710, *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments*, 2020 edition.

NFPA 1720, *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments*, 2020 edition.

2.3 Other Publications.

2.3.1 U.S. Government Publications. U.S. Government Publishing Office, 732 North Capitol Street, NW, Washington, DC 20401-0001.

Title 18, U.S. Code, Section 2332a, “Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction.”

2.3.2 Other Publications.

Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 11th edition, Merriam-Webster, Inc., Springfield, MA, 2003.

2.4 References for Extracts in Mandatory Sections.

NFPA 402, *Guide for Aircraft Rescue and Fire-Fighting Operations*, 2019 edition.

NFPA 472, *Standard for Competence of Responders to Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Incidents*, 2018 edition.

NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications*, 2014 edition.

NFPA 1142, *Standard on Water Supplies for Suburban and Rural Fire Fighting*, 2017 edition.

NFPA 1500™, *Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety, Health, and Wellness Program*, 2018 edition.

NFPA 1521, *Standard for Fire Department Safety Officer Professional Qualifications*, 2015 edition.

Chapter 3 Definitions

3.1 General. The definitions contained in this chapter shall apply to the terms used in this standard. Where terms are not defined in this chapter or within another chapter, they shall be defined using their ordinarily accepted meanings within the context in which they are used. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th edition, shall be the source for the ordinarily accepted meaning.

3.2 NFPA Official Definitions.

3.2.1* Approved. Acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction.

3.2.2* Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ). An organization, office, or individual responsible for enforcing the requirements of a code or standard, or for approving equipment, materials, an installation, or a procedure.

3.2.3 Shall. Indicates a mandatory requirement.

3.2.4 Should. Indicates a recommendation or that which is advised but not required.

3.2.5 Standard. An NFPA Standard, the main text of which contains only mandatory provisions using the word "shall" to indicate requirements and that is in a form generally suitable for mandatory reference by another standard or code or for adoption into law. Nonmandatory provisions are not to be considered a part of the requirements of a standard and shall be located in an appendix, annex, footnote, informational note, or other means as permitted in the NFPA Manuals of Style. When used in a generic sense, such as in the phrase "standards development process" or "standards development activities," the term "standards" includes all NFPA Standards, including Codes, Standards, Recommended Practices, and Guides.

3.3 General Definitions.

3.3.1 Aid.

3.3.1.1* Automatic Aid. A plan developed between two or more fire departments for immediate joint response on first alarms. [1142, 2017]

3.3.1.2* Mutual Aid. Reciprocal assistance by emergency services under a prearranged plan. [402, 2019]

3.3.2* Company. A group of members that (1) is under the direct supervision of an officer or leader; (2) is trained and equipped to perform assigned tasks; (3) usually is organized and identified as an engine company, a ladder company, a rescue company, or a squad company; (4) usually operates with one piece of fire apparatus (pumper, aerial apparatus, elevating platform, rescue, squad, ambulance) except where multiple apparatus are assigned that are dispatched and arrive together, continuously operate together, and are managed by a single company officer; and (5) arrives at the incident scene on fire apparatus or assembled at the scene prior to assignment.

3.3.3* Fire and Emergency Service Organization (FESO). Any public, private, governmental, or military organization that provides emergency response, fire suppression, and related activities, whether for profit or government owned and operated.

3.3.4* Fire Department. An organization providing rescue, fire suppression, and related activities.

3.3.5 Hazardous Material. Matter (solid, liquid, or gas) or energy that when released is capable of creating harm to people, the environment, and property, including weapons of mass destruction (WMD) as defined in 18 U.S. Code, Section 2332a, as well as any other criminal use of hazardous materials, such as illicit labs, environmental crimes, or industrial sabotage. [472, 2018]

3.3.6 Special Operations. Those emergency incidents to which the fire department responds that require specific and advanced training and specialized tools and equipment. [1500, 2018]

3.3.7* Standard Operating Procedure. A written organizational directive that establishes or prescribes specific operational or administrative methods to be followed routinely for the performance of designated operations or actions. [1521, 2015]

3.3.8 System.

3.3.8.1* Fire and Emergency Service System. A method of providing services through a planned and organized network of physical and human resources utilizing mandates with a defined mission.

3.3.8.2 Incident Management System (IMS). A system that defines the roles and responsibilities to be assumed by personnel and the operating procedures to be used in the management and direction of emergency operations; the system is also referred to as an incident command system (ICS). [1021, 2014]

Chapter 4 Governance and Administration

4.1 Governing Authority Responsibilities.

4.1.1 The entity responsible for the establishment and operation of the FESO shall adopt a formal statement of purpose that includes the general types of services to be provided, the area to be served, and the delegation of authority.

4.1.2 The level(s) of services to be provided by the FESO shall be determined by the FESO or by the governing authority.

4.1.3* The resources and personnel required to provide the level of service(s) outlined within 4.1.2 shall be determined by the FESO or by the governing authority.

4.2 Scope of Authority.

4.2.1* The entity responsible for the establishment of the FESO shall create the legal authority for operation of the FESO.

4.2.2 The FESO shall operate within and comply with the existing laws in respect to its areas of jurisdiction and responsibilities.

4.3 Concept of Risk.

4.3.1 The FESO shall carry out a program to develop public awareness and cooperation in management of risk, based on analysis of relevant loss records and potential hazards in the identifiable physical and social sectors of the community.

4.3.2 The means and level of service provided and the degree of risk accepted by the jurisdiction shall be subject to local determination.