

NFPA®

303

Fire Protection Standard for
Marinas and Boatyards

2021



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NFPA® 303

Fire Protection Standard for Marinas and Boatyards

2021 Edition

This edition of NFPA 303, *Fire Protection Standard for Marinas and Boatyards*, was prepared by the Technical Committee on Marinas and Boatyards. It was issued by the Standards Council on March 15, 2020, with an effective date of April 4, 2020, and supersedes all previous editions.

This edition of NFPA 303 was approved as an American National Standard on April 4, 2020.

Origin and Development of NFPA 303

This first standard on the subject of marinas and boatyards was adopted by NFPA in 1940 on the recommendation of the Committee on Boat Basins and Municipal Marinas of the then NFPA Marine Section. The following year, the scope of the recommendations was enlarged to include boat service and storage yards. Minor amendments were adopted in 1951, 1952, and 1957. A revised edition was produced in 1960 by the Committee on Motor Craft and Marinas.

In 1961, the Sectional Committee on Marinas and Boatyards was established to deal exclusively with these matters. A complete revision of NFPA 303 was developed and adopted in 1963, amendments to which were adopted in 1966, 1969, 1975, and 1984. In 1986, a complete revision of NFPA 303 was adopted; it incorporated boat condominiums and multiple berthing facilities and provided updated electrical and fire protection requirements. Subsequent revisions to the standard were made in the 1990, 1995, 2000, and 2006 editions.

In 2011, the committee made changes to the requirements for automatic sprinkler protection in buildings with multilevel boat rack storage arrangements to conform with a revision in the 2010 edition of NFPA 13, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems*. A new requirement for posting emergency contact information at marinas and boatyards was added to that edition of NFPA 303, as well as guidance for reducing electric shock hazards and the use of corrosion-resistant materials in certain fixed extinguishing systems.

The 2016 edition of NFPA 303 included revisions for inspection, testing, and maintenance of firefighting equipment and mandated that a marina or boatyard prefire plan be submitted to the AHJ annually for approval. This edition of the standard added requirements to address fire hazards caused by portable cooking equipment and portable electric heaters on boats in marinas and boatyards.

The committee addressed the technical aspects of electric shock drowning (ESD) and added a requirement to conduct an inspection of ground-fault protection devices at regular intervals (at least annually) and to correct any deficiencies found.

The 2021 edition further addresses electrical hazards. Most boat owners are unaware that dangerous ground-fault leakages can occur on their vessels. The standard now states that all vessels shall be tested for the presence of ac ground faults at the time of the initial connection to a marina electrical system that has not been constructed in accordance with the shore-power ground-fault requirements of Article 555 of NFPA 70®, *National Electrical Code*®. Vessels shall not be permitted to connect to the marina system if they display ground-fault leakage exceeding 30 mA. These requirements shall apply retroactively to all marinas within 2 years of adoption of this edition of the standard. The requirement for receptacle configurations of less than 30 amperes and no more than 50 amperes has been revised to require these devices to be of a locking and grounding type that is listed and labeled.

NFPA 303 now specifies the minimum width of fire department access roads. The fire protection requirements for in-out dry storage and rack storage have been revised in this edition. Standpipe systems shall now be designed and installed in accordance with NFPA 14, and portable fire extinguishers shall be provided in accordance with NFPA 10. An automatic fire-extinguishing system is now required for covered piers in excess of 5000 ft². The operators of marinas and boatyards are now required to keep a record of employee training related to fire drills. Guidance information is now provided for signage at berths and slips to facilitate reporting of fires or other emergencies.

Technical Committee on Marinas and Boatyards

Bradford T. Cronin, *Chair*
Newport Fire Department, RI [E]

Mark A. Beavers, Travelers Insurance, VA [I]
Scott D. Bowden, Port Niantic Incorporated, CT [U]
Kenneth E. Bush, Maryland State Fire Marshal's Office, MD [E]
 Rep. International Fire Marshals Association
Brian Campbell, Gulfport Fire Department, FL [E]
Lisa M. Cockerill, Mississauga Fire & Emergency Services, Canada [U]
James Coté, Coté Marine LLC, FL [SE]
Gregory T. Davis, Davis & Company, Ltd., IL [SE]
Chris Dolan, Marina Electrical Equipment, VA [M]
Paul J. Doyle, Petroleum Marine Consultants, LLC, FL [IM]
Charles Fort, Boat U.S., VA [C]
Joseph R. Fowler, S.A. Comunale Company, Inc., OH [IM]
Casey O. Housley, Sanders Warren Russell & Scheer LLP, KS [SE]
Sarah Maman, Fire, Life Safety, & Security Institute, Inc., FL [SE]
Kevin Marr, Patriot Fire Protection, Inc., WA [M]
 Rep. National Fire Sprinkler Association
John J. McDevitt, Drexel Hill, PA [C]

Richard E. Morris, Town of East Lyme, CT [E]
 Rep. International Fire Marshals Association
William E. Moses, Port Products LLC, AZ [U]
Paul Murphy, Borough of Atlantic Highlands, NJ [E]
Clifford Norton, Bellingham Marine Utilities, FL [IM]
Jack Poole, Poole Fire Protection, Inc., KS [SE]
Erne Rodriguez, Jr., Wiginton Fire Protection Engineering, Inc., FL [SE]
James J. Rogers, Towns of Oak Bluffs, Tisbury, West Tisbury, MA [E]
Adam G. Shelton, HydroHoist International, HyPo Division, OK [M]
Philip A. Teah, International Dock Products, Inc., FL [M]
Reed B. Varley, Varley-Campbell & Associates, Inc., FL [SE]
John Venneman, Chubb, GA [I]
Joseph H. Versteeg, Versteeg Associates, CT [C]
Terry L. Victor, Johnson Controls, MD [M]
Bill Williams, Bayside Ventures Inc., OK [U]

Alternates

Timothy W. Bowe, ABCO Peerless Sprinkler Company, NY [M]
 (Alt. to Kevin Marr)
Robert L. Dufault, Newport Fire Department, RI [E]
 (Alt. to Bradford T. Cronin)
Brett Seggerman, Poole Fire Protection, OK [SE]
 (Alt. to Jack Poole)
George W. Stanley, Wiginton Fire Protection Engineering, Inc., FL [SE]
 (Alt. to Erne Rodriguez, Jr.)

Barry Tarnef, Chubb, NJ [I]
 (Alt. to John Venneman)
Frank Velardi, Johnson Controls, NJ [M]
 (Alt. to Terry L. Victor)

Lawrence Russell, NFPA Staff Liaison

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Committee Scope: This Committee shall have primary responsibility for documents on fire prevention and protection in the design, construction, and operation of marinas and boatyards.

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NFPA 303

Fire Protection Standard for

Marinas and Boatyards

2021 Edition

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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 applies to the construction and operation of marinas, boatyards, yacht clubs, boat condominiums, docking facilities associated with residential condominiums, multiple-docking facilities at multiple-family residences, and all associated piers, docks, and floats.

1.1.1 This standard also applies to support facilities and structures used for construction, repair, storage, hauling and launching, or fueling of vessels if fire on a pier would pose an immediate threat to these facilities, or if a fire at a referenced facility would pose an immediate threat to a docking facility.

1.1.2 This standard applies to marinas and facilities servicing small recreational and commercial craft, yachts, and other craft of not more than 300 gross tons.

1.1.3 This standard is not intended to apply to a private, noncommercial docking facility constructed or occupied for the use of the owners or residents of the associated single-family dwelling.

1.1.4 No requirement in this standard is to be construed as reducing applicable building, fire, and electrical codes.

1.2* Purpose. This standard is intended to provide a minimum acceptable level of safety to life and property from fire and electrical hazards at marinas and related facilities.

1.3 Retroactivity. The provisions of this standard reflect a consensus of what is necessary to provide an acceptable degree of protection from the hazards addressed in this standard at the time the standard was issued.

1.3.1 Unless otherwise specified, the provisions of this standard shall not apply to facilities, equipment, structures, or installations that existed or were approved for construction or installation prior to the effective date of the standard. Where specified, the provisions of this standard shall be retroactive.

1.3.2 In those cases where the authority having jurisdiction determines that the existing situation presents an unacceptable degree of risk, the authority having jurisdiction shall be permitted to apply retroactively any portions of this standard deemed appropriate.

1.3.3 The retroactive requirements of this standard shall be permitted to be modified if their application clearly would be impractical in the judgment of the authority having jurisdiction, and only where it is clearly evident that a reasonable degree of safety is provided.

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 1, *Fire Code*, 2021 edition.

NFPA 10, *Standard for Portable Fire Extinguishers*, 2018 edition.

NFPA 13, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems*, 2019 edition.

NFPA 14, *Standard for the Installation of Standpipe and Hose Systems*, 2019 edition.

NFPA 20, *Standard for the Installation of Stationary Pumps for Fire Protection*, 2019 edition.

NFPA 24, *Standard for the Installation of Private Fire Service Mains and Their Appurtenances*, 2019 edition.

NFPA 25, *Standard for the Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems*, 2020 edition.

NFPA 30A, *Code for Motor Fuel Dispensing Facilities and Repair Garages*, 2021 edition.

NFPA 31, *Standard for the Installation of Oil-Burning Equipment*, 2020 edition.

NFPA 33, *Standard for Spray Application Using Flammable or Combustible Materials*, 2021 edition.

NFPA 54, *National Fuel Gas Code*, 2021 edition.

NFPA 58, *Liquefied Petroleum Gas Code*, 2020 edition.

NFPA 70®, *National Electrical Code®*, 2020 edition.

NFPA 72®, *National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code®*, 2019 edition.

NFPA 90B, *Standard for the Installation of Warm Air Heating and Air-Conditioning Systems*, 2021 edition.

NFPA 110, *Standard for Emergency and Standby Power Systems*, 2019 edition.

NFPA 111, *Standard on Stored Electrical Energy Emergency and Standby Power Systems*, 2019 edition.

NFPA 211, *Standard for Chimneys, Fireplaces, Vents, and Solid Fuel-Burning Appliances*, 2019 edition.

NFPA 220, *Standard on Types of Building Construction*, 2021 edition.

NFPA 302, *Fire Protection Standard for Pleasure and Commercial Motor Craft*, 2020 edition.

NFPA 307, *Standard for the Construction and Fire Protection of Marine Terminals, Piers, and Wharves*, 2021 edition.

NFPA 326, *Standard for the Safeguarding of Tanks and Containers for Entry, Cleaning, or Repair*, 2020 edition.

NFPA 1962, *Standard for the Care, Use, Inspection, Service Testing, and Replacement of Fire Hose, Couplings, Nozzles, and Fire Hose Appliances*, 2018 edition.

2.3 Other Publications.

▲ 2.3.1 **UL Publications.** Underwriters Laboratories Inc., 333 Pfingsten Road, Northbrook, IL 60062-2096.

UL 231, *Standard for Power Outlets*, 2016.

UL 1686, *Standard for Pin and Sleeve Configurations*, 2012, revised 2016.

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 1, *Fire Code*, 2018 edition.

NFPA 30A, *Code for Motor Fuel Dispensing Facilities and Repair Garages*, 2018 edition.

NFPA 72®, *National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code®*, 2019 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 Labeled. Equipment or materials to which has been attached a label, symbol, or other identifying mark of an organization that is acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction and concerned with product evaluation, that maintains periodic inspection of production of labeled equipment or materials, and by whose labeling the manufacturer indicates

compliance with appropriate standards or performance in a specified manner.

3.2.4* Listed. Equipment, materials, or services included in a list published by an organization that is acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction and concerned with evaluation of products or services, that maintains periodic inspection of production of listed equipment or materials or periodic evaluation of services, and whose listing states that either the equipment, material, or service meets appropriate designated standards or has been tested and found suitable for a specified purpose.

3.2.5 Shall. Indicates a mandatory requirement.

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

3.2.7 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 Automatic Fire Detector.** A device designed to detect the presence of a fire signature and to initiate action. For the purpose of this Code, automatic fire detectors are classified as follows: Automatic Fire Extinguishing or Suppression System Operation Detector, Fire–Gas Detector, Heat Detector, Other Fire Detectors, Radiant Energy–Sensing Fire Detector, and Smoke Detector. (SIG-IDS) [72, 2019]

3.3.2 Berth. The water space to be occupied by a boat or other vessel alongside or between bulkheads, piers, piles, fixed and floating docks, or any similar access structure. (See also 3.3.21, *Slip*.)

3.3.3* Boatyard. A facility used for constructing, repairing, servicing, hauling from the water, storing (on land and in water), and launching of boats.

3.3.4 Building. A roofed-over structure with or without enclosed walls.

3.3.5 Bulkhead. A vertical structural wall, usually of stone, timber, metal, concrete, or synthetic material, constructed along, and generally parallel to, the shoreline to retain earth as an extension of the upland, and often to provide suitable water depth at the waterside face.

3.3.6* Crane. A mechanical device used for lifting or moving boats.

3.3.7* Docking Facility. A covered or open, fixed or floating structure that provides access to the water and to which boats are secured.

3.3.8 Electrical Datum Plane. The electrical datum plane is defined as follows: (a) in land areas subject to tidal fluctuation, the electrical datum plane is a horizontal plane 2 ft (610 mm)

above the highest tide level for the area occurring under normal circumstances, that is, highest high tide; (b) in land areas not subject to tidal fluctuation, the electrical datum plane is a horizontal plane 2 ft (610 mm) above the highest water level for the area occurring under normal circumstances; (c) the electrical datum plane for floating piers and landing stages that are (1) installed to permit rise and fall response to water level, without lateral movement, and (2) that are so equipped that they can rise to the datum plane established for (a) or (b) is a horizontal plane 30 in. (762 mm) above the water level at the floating pier or landing stage and a minimum of 12 in. (305 mm) above the level of the deck.

3.3.9* Fuel Product Lines. Piping that connects the fuel storage tanks to the fuel dispensing pumps.

3.3.10 Fuel Storage. An area or structure (i.e., tank) that contains fuel products in storage for subsequent dispensing.

3.3.11* Fueling Station or Pier. An area on a pier, dock, bulkhead, or similar structure that is specifically used for the dispensing of fuel products.

3.3.12 Liquids.

3.3.12.1* Combustible Liquid. Any liquid that has a closed-cup flash point at or above 100°F (37.8°C).

Δ 3.3.12.2* Flammable Liquid. A liquid that has a closed-cup flash point that is below 100°F (37.8°C) and a maximum vapor pressure of 40 psia (2068 mm Hg) at 100°F (37.8°C).

3.3.13* Marina. A facility, generally on the waterfront, that stores and services boats in berths, on moorings, and in dry storage or dry stack storage.

3.3.14 Marine Power Outlet. An enclosed assembly that can include receptacles, circuit breakers, fused switches, fuses and watt-hour meter, and monitoring means approved for marine use.

3.3.15* Marine Railway. A device used for hauling boats out of the water or placing boats into the water.

3.3.16 Monorail. Overhead track and hoist system for moving material around the boatyard or moving and launching boats.

3.3.17* Mooring(s). Any place where a boat is wet stored or berthed.

3.3.18 Pier. A structure extending over the water and supported on a fixed foundation (fixed pier), or on flotation (floating pier), that provides access to the water.

3.3.18.1 Covered Pier. A fixed or floating pier that is provided with a roof system to protect berthed boats from the weather.

3.3.18.2 Fixed Pier. Pier constructed on a permanent, fixed foundation, such as on piles, that permanently establishes the elevation of the structure deck with respect to land.

3.3.18.3 Floating Pier. Pier designed with inherent flotation capability that allows the structure to float on the water surface and rise and fall with water level changes.

3.3.19 Qualified Person. One who has skills and knowledge related to the construction and operation of the equipment and installations and has received safety training on the hazards involved.

3.3.20 Readily Accessible. Capable of being reached quickly and safely for effective use.

3.3.21 Slip. A berthing space between or adjacent to piers, wharves, or docks; the water areas associated with boat occupation. (See also 3.3.2, Berth.)

3.3.22 Stack Storage. See 3.3.24.2, Dry Stack Storage.

3.3.23* Standpipe System. An arrangement of piping, valves, hose connections, and allied equipment with the hose connections located in such a manner that water can be discharged in streams or spray patterns through attached hose and nozzles, for the purpose of extinguishing a fire and so protecting designated buildings, structures, or property in addition to providing occupant protection as required.

3.3.24 Storage.

3.3.24.1* Covered Storage. A structure or building capable of receiving and storing boats for extended periods of time while protecting the boats from exposure to the weather.

3.3.24.2* Dry Stack Storage. A facility, either covered or uncovered, constructed of horizontal and vertical structural members designed to allow placement of small boats in defined slots arranged both horizontally and vertically.

3.3.24.3 Seasonal Storage. Storage of boats for extended periods when not in use (e.g., winter storage).

3.3.24.4 Wet Storage. Storage of a boat afloat in a partly or completely laid-up status.

Chapter 4 Management

4.1* Smoking Restrictions.

4.1.1 Smoking shall be prohibited in the following areas:

- (1) Where fuels and other flammable liquids are stored or dispensed
- (2) Covered or enclosed boat storage areas
- (3) Battery rooms
- (4) Locations designated by management or the authority having jurisdiction

4.1.2 "No Smoking" signs shall be posted in the areas identified in 4.1.1.

4.2 Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Fire-Fighting Equipment and Fire Protection Systems. A program that requires periodic inspection, testing, maintenance and operation of fire-fighting equipment and fire protection systems and ensures access to all parts of the facility for fire-fighting personnel shall be approved.

4.2.1 All fire-fighting equipment and fire protection systems shall be inspected, tested, and maintained at regular intervals in accordance with manufacturers' instructions and the applicable NFPA standards.

4.2.1.1* Fire extinguishers shall be inspected, tested, and maintained in accordance with NFPA 10.

4.2.1.2* Fire extinguishers shall be emptied at the end of their service period.

4.2.2 Hoses on standpipe and sprinkler systems shall be inspected, tested, and maintained in accordance with NFPA 1962.