

NFPA® 73

Standard for Electrical Inspections for Existing Dwellings

2011 Edition



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An International Codes and Standards Organization

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NFPA® 73

Standard for

Electrical Inspections for Existing Dwellings

2011 Edition

This edition of NFPA 73, *Standard for Electrical Inspections for Existing Dwellings*, was prepared by the Technical Committee on Electrical Systems Maintenance and released by the National Electrical Code Technical Correlating Committee. It was issued by the Standards Council on June 1, 2010, with an effective date of June 21, 2010, and supersedes all previous editions.

This edition of NFPA 73 was approved as an American National Standard on June 21, 2010.

Origin and Development of NFPA 73

NFPA began the development of NFPA 73, *Electrical Inspection Code for Existing Dwellings*, in 1990. The original document was developed as a result of the united efforts of various insurance, electrical, construction, inspection, utility, and other allied interests.

The document was initiated in response to data obtained from studies conducted on older homes by NFPA, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), and other groups involved with fire investigations. The studies clearly indicated that fires and other hazards attributed to electrical causes would be significantly reduced if electrical systems were installed and maintained in accordance with the *NFPA 70, National Electrical Code (NEC)*.

The fact that only 5 percent of fires occurred in dwellings under 10 years of age is reported in one of the studies, which indicates the effectiveness of the *NEC* and electrical inspections at the time of construction. It also suggests that identification and correction of unsafe conditions in existing dwellings by means of appropriate inspections could effectively eliminate a significant portion of the residential fire occurrences and other associated hazards.

The first edition of NFPA 73, *Residential Electrical Maintenance Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings*, was adopted in 1993. The second edition of the document was submitted for formal adoption at the 1996 NFPA Annual Meeting.

Significant changes to the 2000 edition of NFPA 73 included a new title and an expanded scope. The Standards Council and the *National Electrical Code* Technical Correlating Committee approved changing the scope of the document to include all dwelling units, including multifamily dwellings and mobile and manufactured homes. To support expanding the document scope, the NFPA Technical Committee on Electrical Systems Maintenance cited that deterioration of electrical systems could occur in existing multifamily dwellings and mobile and manufactured homes. The inspection community now had a code that could be used to improve the safety of electrical systems in all dwelling units. The change in the title from “maintenance” to “inspection” reflected the intended purpose of the document.

The 2006 edition reflected editorial revisions of the code to comply with the latest edition of the *Manual of Style for NFPA Technical Committee Documents*.

For the 2011 edition, the title of the document has been changed from *Electrical Inspection Code for Existing Dwellings* to *Standard for Electrical Inspections for Existing Dwellings* to facilitate its use within the home inspection community. This assists the inspectors, who are not code enforcement officials, by allowing them to utilize the standard for their inspections and thereby improve the electrical safety in dwelling units.

Several changes were made to the standard to address issues identified in the technical report issued by the Fire Protection Research Foundation's "Residential Electrical Systems Aging Research Project." The dismantling of 30 homes, originally constructed from 1892 to 1972, revealed several areas that required investigation, examination, or inspection. Potential fire hazards were identified, including incorrect conductor insulation for wiring of luminaires, multiple conductors terminated on a single terminal, and insulation in direct contact with luminaires not designed for the application. Shock hazards were also identified, such as conductors or cables used inappropriately, ground-fault circuit interrupter receptacles incorrectly wired, and the grounded conductor attached to normally non-current-carrying metal parts.

An annex table was added to assist users of the standard in determining when requirements for arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCI) and ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCI) were added to the *National Electrical Code*. With the knowledge of which *NEC* edition was in place at the time of the construction or renovation, the user of the standard can easily determine where AFCI and GFCI protection is necessary.



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Committee Scope: This Committee shall have primary responsibility for documents on minimizing the risk of electricity as a source of electric shock and as a potential ignition source of fires and explosions. It shall also be responsible for text to minimize the propagation of fire and explosions due to electrical installations.

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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 the maintenance of electrical systems in existing one-family, two-family, and multifamily dwellings. This Committee shall report to the Technical Correlating Committee of the National Electrical Code.

