



Coffee Break Training - Fire Protection Series

Inspection Techniques: Technical Assistance

No. FP-2011-52 December 27, 2011

Learning Objective: The student shall be able to describe the circumstances under which the code official can require technical assistance.

From time to time, code officials entertain a new product, operation, material, or facility that is highly complex or outside the scope of the model building and fire codes.

The sophistication or novelty of the proposal may cause the code official anxiety due to its unfamiliar nature or the inability to see how it fits within the scope of the legally-adopted documents. Fortunately, there is a solution to these rare occasions: the code official is authorized by the model fire and building codes to obtain technical assistance at no cost to the jurisdiction.

This technical assistance can be in the form of a “technical opinion and report” produced by a qualified engineer, specialist, or laboratory or fire safety specialty organization that the code official approves.

The technical opinion and report should analyze the fire safety properties of the design, operation, or use of the facility or products that are proposed and recommend any changes needed to comply with the intent or letter of the model code. The code official is authorized to require that the design submittals are prepared and stamped by a registered design professional such as an architect or engineer.

The technical evaluation may analyze fire-resistive construction, fire protection systems, separation and isolation requirements, means of egress, alarm and detection, and management controls that should be required to minimize the likelihood of fires, explosions, unwanted releases, product failure, or environmental degradation.

It is important to remember that the code official retains the authority to approve or deny the technical report and opinion. The technical report and opinion is simply another piece of information the code official can use to make his or her decision regarding the proposal’s safety and influence on people and the environment.



The variety of products stored in these tanks may require the evaluation of a specialist who can provide technical assistance.

