



Coffee Break Training - Fire Protection Series

Inspection Techniques: Job Site Coordination

No. FP-2012-48 November 27, 2012

Learning Objective: The student shall be able to identify the party responsible for fire protection during construction and remodeling.

While today's photograph is an outrageous example of quality control gone awry (as well as the opportunity for a bad joke about a new type of fire wall), it illustrates an important message about job site coordination.

In this example, the framing and wallboard contractor was assigned the responsibility of erecting a temporary partition to isolate a tenant space from a corridor while the entire building was undergoing a significant remodeling project. According to the plans provided by the project architect, the contractor installed the partition specifically as directed. If he gave any thought to its effect on the fire protection system, the result speaks for itself.

Remodeling and construction projects are dynamic and complicated work sites that involve a number of critical players: owners, architects, engineers, contractors, subcontractors, inspectors, and even visitors. As a project evolves, changes in one area may affect outcomes in another. Large projects often are more complex than small ones and are more likely to have errors as a result.

Project coordination for fire safety and protection in the form of a Fire Prevention Program Superintendent is the owner's responsibility. It may be delegated to an architect, job site superintendent, or general contractor, but final authority remains with the owner. (See Coffee Break Training 2006-24 for a description of Fire Prevention Program Superintendent programs.)

Buildings under construction, remodeling, or even demolition are particularly vulnerable to fires. Workers often are using cutting torches or other open flame devices, there may be large amounts of combustible materials throughout the work space, and fire protection systems or fire barriers may be incomplete. Compromising the effectiveness of any fire protection component—such as the sprinkler system in today's picture—increases the likelihood of a catastrophic fire outcome.



A temporary wall during a remodeling project interferes with the operation of this pendant sprinkler.



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