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Antifreeze Solutions in Residential Fire Sprinkler Systems

The 2013 edition of NFPA 13D, as amended by TIA 13-1, discourages the use of antifreeze solutions within residential fire sprinkler systems unless no other practical freeze protection options are available. It is now necessary to research and eliminate other freeze protection options prior to choosing antifreeze. This determination must be submitted to the fire El Dorado County Building Services with every submittal utilizing antifreeze solutions.

Construction considerations utilizing freeze protection options other than antifreeze should be started early in the home design process. The owner, architect, and contractor should be made aware that options are available for avoiding or minimizing the use of non-listed antifreeze solutions. These options may include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Maintaining the temperature in the areas where the fire sprinkler pipe is installed above 40°F and utilizing a wet pipe system.
2. Installing a dry pipe or preaction fire sprinkler system.
3. Utilizing dry pendent or dry sidewall sprinklers extending from heated areas of the house into unheated areas.
4. Heat tracing systems on the pipe in the freezing areas of the house.
5. Limiting the extent of the antifreeze system to the smallest possible area.
6. Utilizing a listed antifreeze solution although none are available as of January 2014.

These options must be considered in each residence prior to selecting antifreeze as the only practical freeze protection solution.

When all other freeze protection options have been explored and eliminated, antifreeze solutions may be used in accordance with NFPA 13D section 9.2.2.2 (TIA 13-1) and the State Fire Marshal Information Bulletin IB13-009. Both of these documents require documentation be presented to the enforcing agency to substantiate the use of the antifreeze solution.

This documentation must indicate that other freeze protection options were explored and eliminated as not practical. The documentation must also consider factors such as maximum concentration of antifreeze, minimum anticipated temperature, system pressure, maximum ceiling height, and sprinkler orifice size. Assistance with this determination may be found in the reports prepared by the NFPA Fire Protection Research Foundation (FPRF) at the following link <http://www.nfpa.org/antifreeze>.

The Determination of use of Antifreeze Solutions in Residential Fire Sprinkler Systems form can be found at <http://www.edcgov.us/Government/Building/Forms.aspx>.