



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CERTIFICATION IN ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGIES®

sponsored by the National Society of Professional Engineers

1420 King Street ◦ Alexandria ◦ Virginia ◦ 22314-2794 ◦ 1-888-IS-NICET

OFFICIAL STATEMENT

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On September 27, 2006, the National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies (NICET) responded to the Illinois State Fire Marshal regarding Proposed Amendments R03 to Title 41: Fire Protection, Chapter I: State Fire Marshal, Part 109, Fire Sprinkler Contractor Licensing Rules. Our comments were intended to ensure that NICET certificate holders would not be required to perform any task or duty that would place them in direct violation of NICET Policy or Code of Ethics, nor expose them unnecessarily to higher personal liability risk. We were also trying to suggest, solely in the interest of greater public protection, that the certification bar be set higher in a pro-active, self-regulatory manner.

In response to several recent letters, email messages, and telephone calls from Fire Sprinkler Industry representatives and NICET certificate holders, NICET publicly affirms our official position that individuals holding a NICET Level III and/or a NICET Level IV certification in Automatic Sprinkler System Layout have the qualifications to independently prepare layout drawings on behalf of fire sprinkler contractors. The current NICET certification program, having served the public and the Fire Protection Industry quite well since its initial introduction in 1980, recognizes that Level III certificate holders are regularly engaged in the layout and detailing of automatic sprinkler systems with little, or no, daily supervision. Therefore, we will support this position to the Illinois State Fire Marshal and other AHJs in the future as appropriate.

We respectfully submit, however, that NICET Level IV certificate holders are more qualified to perform these duties by virtue of the fact that they have demonstrated a greater breadth of knowledge, longer and higher-level work experience, as well as the ability to manage at least one major fire sprinkler layout project. And on behalf of the 957 individuals who have demonstrated these higher competencies and currently maintain a NICET Level IV certification in this specialty area (this represents 21.5 % of the total certified population in this specialty area), we take exception to the National Fire Sprinkler Association's portrayal of Level IV certification as "an honorary achievement".

It is NICET's position also that design professionals (i.e., licensed professional engineers and registered architects) should provide complete design criteria and detailed design documents (e.g., drawings, hydraulic calculations, water supply information, etc.) to fire sprinkler contractors for preparation of layout drawings; and that the same design professional should review the completed layout drawings to ensure that the original design has not been altered. This position is consistent with that of the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES) and the Society of Fire Protection Engineers (SFPE). Therefore, this position will also be conveyed to state fire marshals in the future.

To continue serving the needs of the public and the Fire Protection Industry well into the 21st century, NICET has begun a major effort to review and update the entire scope and content of this certification program. In anticipation of federal and state requirements for NICET certification programs to be accredited to international standards (i.e., ISO/IEC 17024), NICET is also reconfiguring this program to offer standardized, computer-based examinations for each of the four certification levels. This effort is being undertaken with the participation and support of a wide variety of Industry stakeholders; and we expect it to be successfully completed in 2008.

For additional information or comments, contact Michael A. Clark, CAE, NICET General Manager (mclark@nicet.org or 703-548-1518 x105)