

NFPA 40

Standard for the Storage and Handling of Cellulose Nitrate Motion Picture Film 1994 Edition



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The Board of Directors reaffirms that the National Fire Protection Association recognizes that the toxicity of the products of combustion is an important factor in the loss of life from fire. NFPA has dealt with that subject in its technical committee documents for many years.

There is a concern that the growing use of synthetic materials may produce more or additional toxic products of combustion in a fire environment. The Board has, therefore, asked all NFPA technical committees to review the documents for which they are responsible to be sure that the documents respond to this current concern. To assist the committees in meeting this request, the Board has appointed an advisory committee to provide specific guidance to the technical committees on questions relating to assessing the hazards of the products of combustion.

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NFPA 40
Standard for the
Storage and Handling of
Cellulose Nitrate Motion Picture Film
1994 Edition

This edition of NFPA 40, *Standard for the Storage and Handling of Cellulose Nitrate Motion Picture Film*, was prepared by the Technical Committee on Hazardous Chemicals and acted on by the National Fire Protection Association, Inc., at its Annual Meeting held May 16-18, 1994, in San Francisco, CA. It was issued by the Standards Council on July 14, 1994, with an effective date of August 5, 1994, and supersedes all previous editions.

The 1994 edition of this document has been approved by the American National Standards Institute.

Changes other than editorial are indicated by a vertical rule in the margin of the pages on which they appear. These lines are included as an aid to the user in identifying changes from the previous edition.

Origin and Development of NFPA 40

NFPA 40, *Standard for the Storage and Handling of Cellulose Nitrate Motion Picture Film*, was developed by the Committee on Hazardous Chemicals and Explosives and was first adopted by NFPA in 1919. Amendments were adopted in 1921 and 1926. A complete revision was adopted in 1931, with further amendments in 1939, 1946, and 1947. Extensive revisions were also made in 1953. The technical requirements of these early editions of NFPA 40 were based on extensive fire tests conducted by motion picture film manufacturers.

With the reorganization of the committee in 1960, the Technical Committee on Explosives was given responsibility for NFPA 40. However, in 1970, responsibility was transferred to the Technical Committee on Storage, Handling, and Transportation of Hazardous Chemicals. The 1953 edition of NFPA 40 was reconfirmed in 1962. Amendments were adopted in 1967, and the 1967 edition was reconfirmed in 1974.

In 1979, the Technical Committee on Storage, Handling, and Transportation of Hazardous Chemicals debated whether to withdraw the document, since cellulose nitrate motion picture film had not been manufactured for more than 20 years. However, due to the large quantities of cellulose nitrate motion picture film in various archives, the Committee decided to revise NFPA 40 and to maintain it as an NFPA standard until these archive collections are reprinted onto safety film or destroyed. (The Library of Congress, the Smithsonian Institution, the U.S. military services, and others have great quantities of such film that is slowly being reprinted.)

The 1994 edition of NFPA 40 reflects a partial revision of the standard to improve its usability, adoptability, and enforceability and to update old terminology. In addition, the Technical Committee on Hazardous Chemicals clarified the requirements relating to protection of film cabinets and vaults with automatic sprinkler protection, as well as clarifying the requirements for decomposition vents.

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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, and maintain current codes for, classes of hazardous chemicals and codes for specific chemicals when these are warranted by virtue of widespread distribution or special hazards.

Contents

Chapter 1 General	40- 5	4-4 Archival Cabinets	40-10
1-1 Scope	40- 5	4-5 Archival Vaults	40-10
1-2 Purpose	40- 5	Chapter 5 Handling of Nitrate Film	40-11
1-3 Retroactivity	40- 5	5-1 Containers Required	40-11
1-4 Arrangement and Applicability	40- 5	5-2 Shielding	40-11
1-5 Approval of Plans	40- 5	5-3 Scrap Film	40-11
1-6 Definitions	40- 5	5-4 Transportation	40-11
1-7 Equivalency	40- 6		
Chapter 2 Construction Requirements and Arrangements of Buildings	40- 6	Chapter 6 Motion Picture Projection and Special Processes	40-12
2-1 Construction	40- 6	6-1 Enclosures for Motion Picture Projectors	40-12
2-2 Exits	40- 6	6-2 Processing Nitrate Film	40-12
2-3 Explosion Venting	40- 6	Chapter 7 Special Occupancies	40-12
2-4 Space for Workers	40- 6	7-1 Motion Picture Theaters	40-12
2-5 Tables and Racks	40- 6	7-2 Motion Picture Film Exchanges	40-12
2-6 Electrical Equipment	40- 6	7-3 Motion Picture Film Laboratories	40-12
2-7 Heating Equipment	40- 6		
2-8 Duct Systems	40- 7	Chapter 8 Referenced Publications	40-13
Chapter 3 Fire Protection	40- 7	Appendix A Explanatory Material	40-13
3-1 Automatic Sprinklers	40- 7	Appendix B Additional Information on Cellulose Nitrate Film	40-14
3-2 Water Supplies	40- 7	Appendix C Referenced Publications	40-15
3-3 Portable Fire Extinguishers	40- 7	Index	40-16
Chapter 4 Storage of Nitrate Film	40- 7		
4-1 General	40- 7		
4-2 Film Cabinets.	40- 7		
4-3 Vaults Other than Archival Vaults	40- 8		

Foreword

For many years, motion picture film was manufactured with a supporting film base of cellulose nitrate, commonly called nitrocellulose. Since 1951, no cellulose nitrate film base of any kind has been manufactured in the United States. Also, the use of cellulose nitrate film in theaters has virtually ceased. However, large quantities of cellulose nitrate film for archival or other purposes still exist in storage. This storage will continue for many years.

Nitrate motion picture film is required to be stored in vaults. Film cabinets are for temporary overnight storage only. All nitrate film should be inspected annually on a hand rewind machine. Film showing signs of deterioration (e.g., discoloration, blistering, tackiness, etc.) should be either destroyed in a safe manner or sent to a laboratory with the proper facilities for handling nitrate film for possible salvage by printing it onto safety film prior to its disposal. Since exposure to temperatures in excess of 185°F (85°C) accelerates decomposition, certain provisions of this standard are intended to limit the potential for such exposure. Nitrate film in good condition may be permitted to be returned to the vault after inspection. Film in good condition that has been placed into projection equipment for observation and determination of its suitability for use in a film production may be permitted to be projected only in a projection machine approved for nitrate film and projected from a booth meeting the requirements of this standard. Film selected for use should not be returned to the vault but should be reprinted onto safety film. It is intended that, over a period of years, the nitrate film currently in existence will gradually be reprinted onto safety film. In summary: existing nitrate film should be stored in approved vaults, all nitrate film should be hand-inspected annually, and deteriorating film should be destroyed or salvaged by printing onto safety film prior to destruction. Nitrate film should be located only in approved vaults, in approved sprinklered film cabinets, in a projection booth approved for the projection of nitrate film, in that portion of a film laboratory designed for the handling of nitrate film, or in a workroom designed for the inspection of nitrate film and located near the vault from which it was removed.

Since there has been no raw nitrate film manufactured since approximately 1951, there is obviously no raw film available for photographic purposes on motion picture or television sound stages. In addition, film exchanges for theaters are no longer permitted to have nitrate film on the premises. Nitrate film should not be permitted in theater projection booths regardless of whether such booths were originally designed for the projection of nitrate film.

The only projection booths that should be permitted to project nitrate film are those used in conjunction with screening rooms in a motion picture studio having nitrate film vaults on the premises and those in film laboratory screening rooms where the laboratory is approved for handling nitrate film.

It is acknowledged that there might be some nitrate film in the possession of individuals, and those individuals might have private projection rooms. Due to the hazard of nitrate film, it is particularly important that such nitrate film not be projected until it has been reprinted onto safety film.

It is recognized that there might be a particular reason to retain nitrate film for its historical value. While such film cannot be preserved indefinitely, when the incentive for such preservation is compelling, the quantity saved should be very limited and must be stored in individually air-conditioned and sprinklered archival vaults.

Cellulose nitrate contains chemically combined oxygen, sufficient in amount so that it can partially burn or decompose without the presence of air. The gases formed during burning or decomposition are both toxic and flammable and can be produced so rapidly as to create dangerous pressures in building structures and severe hazard to life. Free burning results in the production of less toxic gases, but, due to the rapid burning, such fires are intense and still represent a serious life hazard. The actual heat of combustion of cellulose nitrate film is 6000 Btu/lb to 8000 Btu/lb (13 944 kJ/kg to 18 921 kJ/kg), compared with 7000 Btu/lb to 8000 Btu/lb (16 268 kJ/kg to 18 921 kJ/kg) for wood. However, the rate of combustion is about fifteen times that of wood in similar form. (See Table B-2.)

Since 1951, motion picture film has been produced with a "safety" base of cellulose acetate or other slow-burning esters or polyesters. The fire hazard characteristics of all these materials are roughly similar to those of ordinary paper of similar thickness and form. Unlike cellulose nitrate, they do not produce oxides of nitrogen when they burn. Safety film is damaged by heat at a lower temperature than is needed to destroy paper records. For this reason, safety film needs special protection to prevent damage by heat from an exposing fire. (See NFPA 232, *Standard for the Protection of Records*.)

While past experience in the storage and handling of cellulose nitrate film has resulted in a good safety record, fire tests conducted prior to 1967 indicated the desirability of a modification of existing standards. The requirements of this standard, therefore, apply strictly to long-term storage of cellulose nitrate film.

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NOTICE: An asterisk (*) following the number or letter designating a paragraph indicates explanatory material on that paragraph in Appendix A.

Additional information on cellulose nitrate film can be found in Appendix B.

Information on referenced publications can be found in Chapter 8 and Appendix C.

Chapter 1 General

1-1 Scope.

1-1.1 This standard shall apply to all facilities involving the storage and handling of cellulose nitrate motion picture film.

1-1.2 This standard shall not apply to facilities involving the manufacture of cellulose nitrate film.

1-1.3 This standard shall not apply to the storage and handling of film having a base other than cellulose nitrate.

1-1.4 This standard shall not apply to photographs or X-ray film.

1-2 Purpose. This standard provides for the storage and handling of cellulose nitrate motion picture film, based on minimum requirements for safety to life and property from fire.

1-3 Retroactivity. Since nitrate film deteriorates with age, the provisions of this standard are retroactive. Where improvements have been made over previous editions of this standard, the incorporation of these changes in existing facilities is required particularly where cellulose nitrate film storage will continue.

Exception: As otherwise allowed by this standard.

1-4 Arrangement and Applicability.

1-4.1 This standard gives general provisions regarding the storage and handling of cellulose nitrate motion picture film and special provisions for such occupancies as motion picture projection booths, nitrate film vaults, and laboratories handling nitrate film. These special provisions apply in addition to any and all general provisions that are applicable.

1-4.2* The grouping of the special provisions under the heading of special occupancies is merely for convenience in the application of this standard. Any particular process or operation in any type of occupancy shall be governed by the provisions given for that process or operation, whether under the heading of that occupancy or any other heading, unless otherwise specifically provided herein.

1-5 Approval of Plans. Before constructing any building for use as a cellulose nitrate motion picture film occupancy, or building any nitrate film vault, or installing any enclosure

for motion picture projection, or installing any screening room, complete plans for the proposed construction or installation shall be submitted for approval to the authority having jurisdiction. These plans shall show in detail all proposed construction and structural changes, means of protection to be provided, the heating system and its protection, electrical equipment, and the character and location of exposures. The plans shall also indicate the maximum amount and types of film to be handled or stored in each area.

1-6 Definitions. For the purpose of this standard, the following terms shall have the meanings given below.

| Approved.* Acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction.

Archival Film. Film of value for record purposes that will be kept in permanent storage.

Archival Rack. A rack intended for use in an archival vault for the storage of high-value or permanent record film. Such racks are constructed so that individual rolls or groups of two rolls are placed in insulated compartments. In certain cases, a maximum of three rolls in a single container can be placed in an insulated compartment.

| Authority Having Jurisdiction.* The organization, office, or individual responsible for approving equipment, an installation, or a procedure.

Cabinet. A cabinet constructed and equipped in accordance with Section 4-2 or 4-4.

Cellulose Nitrate Film. Motion picture or sound recording film coated on a support or base consisting essentially of cellulose nitrate. The terms "cellulose nitrate film" or "nitrate film" are preferable to "nitrocellulose"; however, for practical purposes, the terms are synonymous. The film can be in the form of unexposed film, positive prints, negatives, or used film. (*See Appendix B for additional information.*)

Decomposition Vent. A vent to permit the escape of gases resulting from partial burning or decomposition of nitrate film.

Explosion Vent. A vent to relieve explosion pressures resulting from ignition of a mixture of decomposition gases and air.

Labeled. Equipment or materials to which has been attached a label, symbol, or other identifying mark of an organization that is acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction and concerned with product evaluation that maintains periodic inspection of production of labeled equipment or materials and by whose labeling the manufacturer indicates compliance with appropriate standards or performance in a specified manner.

| Listed.* Equipment or materials included in a list published by an organization acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction and concerned with product evaluation that maintains periodic inspection of production of listed equipment or materials and whose listing states either that the equipment or material meets appropriate standards or has been tested and found suitable for use in a specified manner.

Partition. A partition constructed in accordance with 2-1.2.

Exception: Where some other type of construction is specified.

| Shall. Indicates a mandatory requirement.

Should. Indicates a recommendation or that which is advised but not required.

Standard Roll.* A roll of film 35 mm (1 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.) wide and 1000 ft (305 m) long, weighing approximately 5 lb (2.3 kg). The term is used in calculating the weight of film.

Vault. A vault constructed and equipped in accordance with Section 4-3 or 4-5.

1-7 Equivalency.

1-7.1 Nothing in this standard is intended to prevent the use of systems, methods, or devices of equivalent or superior quality, strength, fire resistance, effectiveness, durability, and safety over those prescribed in this standard, provided technical documentation is submitted to the authority having jurisdiction to demonstrate equivalency and the system, method, or device is approved for the intended purpose.

1-7.2 The specific requirements of this standard for existing buildings shall be permitted to be modified by the authority having jurisdiction to allow alternative arrangements that will secure as nearly equivalent safety to life and protection of film collections from fire as practical, but in no case shall the modification afford less safety to life than compliance with the corresponding provisions contained in this standard for existing buildings. (See also 1-7.1.)

Chapter 2 Construction Requirements and Arrangements of Buildings

2-1 Construction.

2-1.1 Nitrate motion picture film shall be stored or handled only in buildings of Type I construction.

NOTE: See NFPA 220, *Standard on Types of Building Construction*.

Exception: Decomposition vents and explosion vents shall be noncombustible construction.

2-1.2 All rooms in which nitrate film is stored or handled shall be separated from each other and from all other parts of the building by partitions of adequate stability having a fire resistance rating of at least 1 hour, as determined by NFPA 251, *Standard Methods of Fire Tests of Building Construction and Materials*.

Exception: Film vaults shall meet the requirements of Section 4-3 or 4-5.

2-1.2.1 Partitions shall be continuous from floor to ceiling and shall be securely anchored to walls, floors, and ceilings.

2-1.3 Openings in partitions shall be protected by approved fire doors having a 1-hour fire resistance rating and installed according to NFPA 80, *Standard for Fire Doors and Fire Windows*.

2-2 Exits.

2-2.1 All rooms in which nitrate film is handled shall be provided with adequate aisles of minimum 30-in. (76-cm) width.

2-2.2 Rooms in which nitrate film is handled shall have two or more exits, remote from each other.

Exception: Film vaults shall not be required to comply with this provision.

2-2.3 Doors shall swing in the direction of exit travel. Where not clearly identifiable, exits shall be marked by an "EXIT" sign meeting the requirements of NFPA 101®, *Life Safety Code*®. (For illuminated exit signs, see Section 2-6 of the *Life Safety Code*.)

2-3 Explosion Venting.

2-3.1* Explosion venting shall be provided in new construction for rooms or vaults used for storing and handling nitrate film.

Exception: Projection rooms, rewind rooms, and rooms where the total quantity of film not stored in vented cabinets will not exceed 20 standard rolls or 20,000 ft (6096 m) shall not be required to comply with this provision.

2-3.2 Explosion vents shall consist of approved explosion venting sash or equally effective vent construction or assemblies approved by the authority having jurisdiction. Vents shall be provided in the ratio of 1 ft² of free vent area per each 50 ft³ of room or vault volume (1 m² per 1.4 m³).

2-4* Space for Workers.

2-4.1 There shall be at least 35 ft² (3.3 m²) of floor area for each worker in every inspection room.

2-4.2 Not more than 15 persons shall work at any one time in any one room in which nitrate film is handled.

2-5 Tables and Racks.

2-5.1 Tables and racks used in connection with the handling of film (e.g., joining, inspection, and assembly tables) shall be noncombustible or of wood construction with no member less than 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (3.8 cm) in least dimension.

2-5.2 Tables shall not have racks or shelves beneath them.

2-5.3 Tables and racks shall be kept at least 4 in. (10 cm) away from any radiator or heating apparatus.

2-6 Electrical Equipment.

2-6.1 All electrical wiring and equipment shall comply with NFPA 70, *National Electrical Code*®, for Class I, Division 2 locations. The temperature rating of electrical equipment shall be Class T6.

2-6.2 In any room or vault in which nitrate film is handled or stored, artificial illumination shall be restricted to incandescent or fluorescent light fixtures.

2-6.3 Motors shall be located or arranged so that film cannot come in contact with them.

2-7 Heating Equipment.

2-7.1 Artificial heating in any building or room in which nitrate film is handled or stored (other than a vault) shall be restricted to hot water or steam not exceeding 15 psig (103 kPa).

Exception: Approved electric steam radiators operating at pressures not exceeding 15 psig (103 kPa) and protected with wire mesh guards shall be permitted to be used if of the fixed (nonportable) type.

2-7.1.1 The requirements of 2-7.1 shall not be interpreted as prohibiting the installation of an indirect heating system using high-pressure steam when the radiators or heating coils of such a system are not located in the room or rooms being heated. Heat-generating equipment shall be located in a separate room.

2-7.2 All steam pipes within 6 ft (1.8 m) of the floor and where passing through partitions or racks or near woodwork shall be protected by insulation.

2-7.3 All radiators, heating coils, pipes, and returns that are near the floor or so located as to permit contact with any combustible material, waste, or dirt shall be guarded and protected with 1/4-in. (6.4-mm) mesh galvanized steel wire cloth (hardware cloth, No. 20 B & S gauge or equivalent). The bottoms of such guards shall be arranged so that they can be lifted for cleaning. The tops of such guards shall be sloped so that they cannot be used as shelves. Guards shall be constructed so that no film can come within 4 in. (10 cm) of the heating surface. Guards shall be constructed with a substantial metal framework that will prevent the wire mesh from being forced against the radiator or pipes.

2-8 Duct Systems.

2-8.1 Air conditioning, warm air heating, air cooling, and ventilating systems employing ducts shall be installed in accordance with NFPA 90A, *Standard for the Installation of Air Conditioning and Ventilating Systems*.

2-8.2 Any duct system used for air conditioning a film vault or room in which nitrate film is handled shall be entirely independent, with no duct connecting to any other vault.

Chapter 3 Fire Protection

3-1* Automatic Sprinklers.

3-1.1 The purpose of this protection is to prevent fire or heat from affecting storage not initially involved.

3-1.2 Every room in which nitrate film is stored or handled in quantities greater than 50 lb (22.7 kg) (10 standard rolls) shall be protected by an automatic sprinkler system installed in accordance with the requirements for extra hazard occupancies of NFPA 13, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems*.

Exception: Motion picture projection booths or rooms and rewinding rooms.

3-1.3 Protection for areas other than film cabinets and vaults shall utilize automatic sprinklers. Protection for film cabinets and vaults (archival or other than archival) shall be permitted to utilize an automatic sprinkler system or a deluge system using fixed spray nozzles or open sprinklers.

3-1.3.1 The requirements of NFPA 13, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems*, shall apply where sealed sprinklers or open sprinklers are used with pre-action or deluge systems.

3-1.3.2 The requirements of NFPA 15, *Standard for Water Spray Fixed Systems for Fire Protection*, shall apply where fixed spray nozzles are used.

3-1.4 In areas or rooms where nitrate film is handled, the area protected per sprinkler head shall not exceed 64 ft² (6.0 m²), with sprinklers and branch lines not over 8 ft (2.4 m) apart.

3-2 Water Supplies.

3-2.1 Water supplies acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction shall be provided.

3-2.2 Water supplies for automatic sprinklers shall be based on 20 gpm (1.26 L/sec) per sprinkler for 20 minutes for the total number of sprinklers in one vault, plus 25 percent of the sprinklers in the communicating fire area.

3-3* Portable Fire Extinguishers. Every room in which nitrate film is stored or handled shall be provided with portable fire extinguishers of types using water or water solutions.

NOTE: See NFPA 10, *Standard for Portable Fire Extinguishers*.

Exception: Film vaults shall not be required to comply with this provision.

Chapter 4 Storage of Nitrate Film

4-1 General. Nitrate motion picture film not in process or being worked on shall be stored as follows:

(a) Amounts exceeding 25 lb (11.4 kg) (5 standard rolls) but not exceeding 750 lb (340 kg) (150 standard rolls) shall be stored in approved cabinets or in vaults. (See Sections 4-2 and 4-3.)

(b) Amounts exceeding 750 lb (340 kg) shall be stored in vaults. (See Section 4-3.)

(c) Archival film shall be stored in archival cabinets or archival vaults, subject to the limitations of Section 4-1(a) and (b). (See Sections 4-4 and 4-5.)

4-2 Film Cabinets.

4-2.1 Film cabinets shall be constructed in the following manner:

(a) The bottom, top, door, and sides of the cabinet shall be at least No. 18 U.S. gauge sheet steel and double walled with 1 1/2 in. (3.8 cm) air space.

(b) Joints shall be riveted, welded, or made tight by some equally effective means.

(c) The door shall be provided with a three-point latch arrangement, and the door sill shall be raised at least 2 in. (5 cm) above the bottom of the cabinet to retain spilled liquid within the cabinet as shown in Figure 4-2.

4-2.2 Cabinets shall have a capacity not exceeding 375 lb (170 kg) (75 standard rolls).

4-2.3 Shelves shall be of noncombustible insulating material not less than 3/8 in. (9.5 mm) thick or of hardwood not less than 1 in. (2.5 cm) thick.

4-2.3.1 Shelves shall fit tightly to the back and sides of the cabinet. There shall be a clearance of at least 1 in. (2.5 cm) between the front of the shelf and the inside of the door.

4-2.3.2 Shelves shall be 1 in. (2.5 cm) wider, with a tolerance of 1/4 in. (6.4 mm), than the diameter of the largest

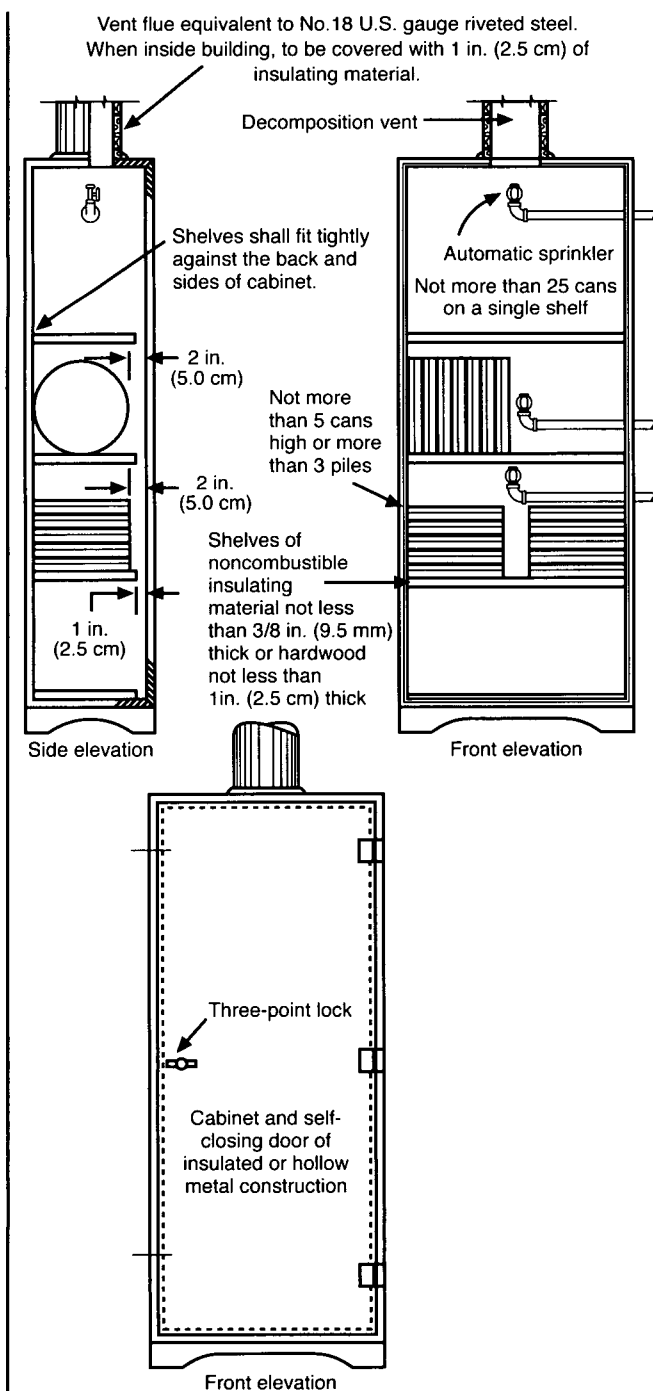


Figure 4-2 Standard film cabinet (for other than archival film).

roll stored in the cabinet. Stops or bars shall be provided so that film cans cannot be stored with the front edge less than $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (19 mm) from the front edge of the shelf. There shall be no thumbholes or indentations in the shelves that will allow any part of the containers to project forward from the front edge of the shelf.

4-2.4* Each cabinet having a capacity of more than 50 lb (22.7 kg) (10 standard rolls) of nitrate film shall be provided with a vent to the outside of the building. The vent

shall have a minimum effective cross-sectional area of 14 in.² per 100 lb (91 cm² per kg) of film capacity.

4-2.4.1 Vent flues shall be of construction equivalent to No. 18 U.S. gauge riveted sheet steel and, where inside the building, shall be covered with 1 in. (2.5 cm) of noncombustible thermal insulating material.

4-2.5 Cabinet Protection.

4-2.5.1 Cabinets having a capacity of more than 75 lb (34 kg) (15 standard rolls) of film shall be provided with at least one automatic sprinkler head.

4-2.5.2 Where cans are stored on more than one shelf, as shown in Figure 4-2 and as described in 4-2.6.1 or 4-2.6.2, one sprinkler head shall be provided for each shelf.

4-2.6 Film in cabinets shall be in individual roll containers or in U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) shipping containers. Materials other than film shall not be stored in the same cabinet with nitrate film. Where cabinets are provided with individual insulated compartments for each roll, the individual rolls shall not be required to be in cans or other containers.

4-2.6.1 Film cans, if placed on edge, shall be limited to not more than 25 cans per shelf.

4-2.6.2 Film cans, if placed flat, shall be stacked no more than five cans high, with not more than three stacks per shelf.

4-3 Vaults Other than Archival Vaults. (See Figure 4-3.)

4-3.1 Vaults shall be constructed in accordance with plans submitted to and approved by the authority having jurisdiction.

4-3.1.1 Vaults shall not exceed 750 ft³ (21.2 m³) in inside volume. Where the height of the vault ceiling results in a vault having a volume greater than 750 ft³ (21.2 m³), a heavy wire screen of at least 2-in. (5.0-cm) mesh or equivalent shall be installed below the ceiling to limit the interior vault space to 750 ft³ (21.2 m³). (See Figure 4-3.)

4-3.1.2 Walls and floors of vaults shall be of Type I construction, as defined in NFPA 220, *Standard on Types of Building Construction*, and shall have not less than 4-hour fire resistance. Where masonry units have cracks or holes, the surface shall be plastered on both sides with a cement plaster to a minimum thickness of $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (12.7 mm) to prevent escape of gases through wall cracks.

4-3.1.3 Where the ceiling of a vault is a bearing floor, it shall have a fire resistance of at least 4 hours.

4-3.1.4 Where the vault walls extend 3 ft (0.9 m) or more above the roof, the vault roof and ceiling shall be permitted to be constructed of noncombustible materials and shall be permitted to serve as an explosion vent.

4-3.1.5 Vaults shall be provided with suitable drains or scuppers to carry automatic sprinkler discharge directly to the outside of the building.

Exception: Existing vaults shall not be required to drain directly to the outside.

4-3.2* Door openings shall be protected with automatic, self-closing fire door assemblies having a fire protection rating of 3 hours. Such doors shall be installed in

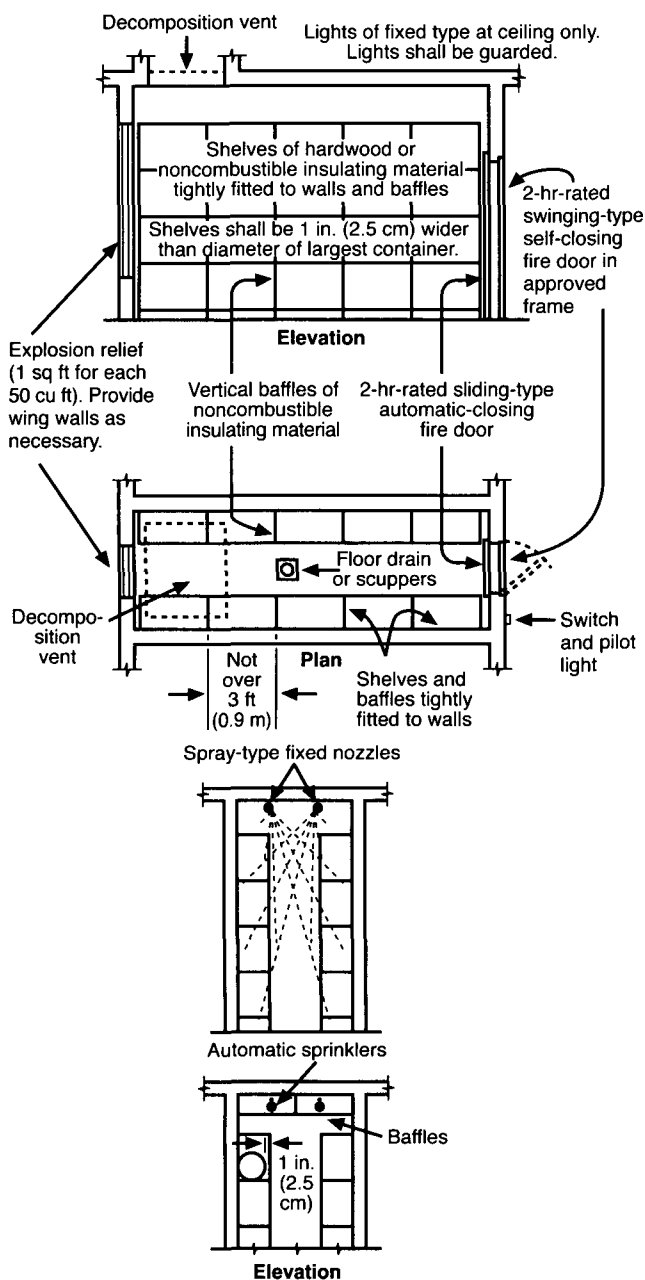


Figure 4-3 Standard film vault (for other than archival film).

accordance with NFPA 80, *Standard for Fire Doors and Fire Windows*, and, if held open, shall be arranged to close automatically upon actuation of an approved smoke detector located in the vault.

Exception: Existing heavy steel doors, or combinations of one swinging and one sliding door, both of steel construction, shall be permitted to be accepted at the discretion of the authority having jurisdiction.

4-3.3* Each vault shall be provided with an independent decomposition vent having a minimum effective cross-sectional area of 200 in.² per 1000 lb (2.8 cm² per kg) (200 standard rolls) of film capacity.

Exception: In vaults provided with explosion venting, the decomposition vent shall be permitted to be omitted.

4-3.3.1 Existing vaults shall be provided with independent vents having an effective minimum cross-sectional area of at least 140 in.² per 1000 lb (2.0 cm² per kg) (200 standard rolls) of film capacity.

4-3.3.2 The vent area for a standard 750-ft³ (21.2-m³) vault of new construction shall be not less than 2000 in.² (130 m²). (See Figure 4-3.3.2.)

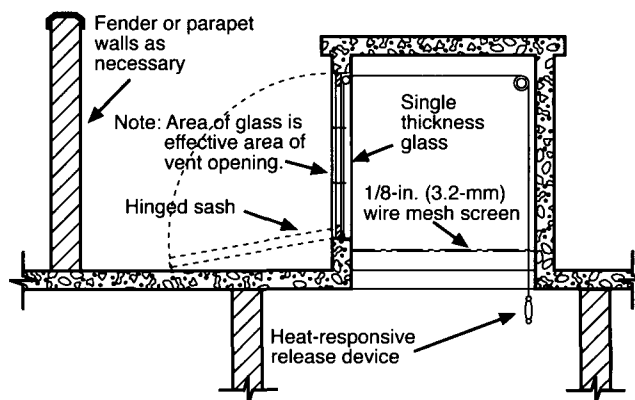


Figure 4-3.3.2 Decomposition vent.

4-3.3.3* Vent flues within the building shall be of Type I construction having a fire resistance of 4 hours.

4-3.3.4 The outlet of each vent shall be above the roof and, where vents discharge horizontally, a deflector wall or other device shall be provided to deflect gases upward. Vents shall be located at least 50 ft (15 m) horizontally from any window or other opening exposed thereby and at least 25 ft (7.6 m) from any fire escape on the same or a higher level.

4-3.3.5* Vaults, especially those having a window for a vent, shall be arranged so that the nitrate film in the vault is protected against ignition by the following:

(a) Rays of the sun, wherever the film in the vault is exposed to direct sunlight entering through the vent;

(b) Radiated heat entering through the vent opening, as from an exposure fire, wherever the vent is severely exposed by buildings or storage of combustible material or by other openings in the same wall.

4-3.3.6* Each vent shall be protected against the weather by either single-thickness [$\frac{1}{8}$ -in. (4.2-mm)] glass in a sash arranged to open automatically in case of fire or a hinged hollow metal or insulated vent panel, either of the above to be equipped with an approved releasing device placed inside the vault. The vents shall be arranged to open by both temperature or internal pressure of 5 lb/ft² (2.3 kg/m²). No pane of glass shall be smaller than 200 in.² (1290 cm²).

Exception: Protection equivalent to that specified in 4-3.3.6.

4-3.3.7 A light wire screen not coarser than $\frac{1}{8}$ -in. (3.2-mm) mesh shall be permitted to be placed in each vent. No bars or screens other than this insect screen shall be placed in vent openings.

4-3.4* Where there is a possibility of fire being transmitted from one vault to another, or to another building, through open skylights, glass windows, light roof panels, or venting devices, provisions shall be made to prevent this possibility.

4-3.5 Racks in new film vaults shall be of hardwood or of noncombustible insulating material and shall consist of shelves tightly fitted to walls and vertical baffles.

4-3.5.1 Vertical baffles shall be of noncombustible insulating material at least $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (9.5 mm) thick, spaced to divide the racks into sections of not more than 3 ft (0.9 m) in width.

4-3.5.2 Shelves shall be at least 1 in. (2.5 cm) wider than the diameter of the largest container stored.

4-3.5.3 Metal supports shall be permitted to be used to keep containers in place.

4-3.5.4 Open racks in new construction shall be used only for storage of film in standard DOT containers or in insulated boxes.

4-3.6 In new vaults, fire protection shall be provided by a wet pipe automatic sprinkler system or, where speed of operation is important, a deluge system.

4-3.6.1 Sprinkler protection utilizing regular automatic sprinklers or open sprinklers shall be calculated on the basis of one sprinkler for each 62.5 ft³ (1.8 m³) of the interior vault volume.

4-3.6.2 The minimum number of sprinklers for a standard 750-ft³ (21.2-m³) vault shall be not less than 12.

4-3.6.3* Sprinklers or nozzles shall be arranged to provide adequate coverage over the tops and fronts of shelves.

4-3.6.4 Where automatic sprinklers are used, baffles made of No. 24 U.S. gauge sheet steel or other acceptable noncombustible material shall be installed between each sprinkler. Baffles shall be rigidly fastened in place and shall extend from the ceiling down to 4 in. (10 cm) below the sprinkler deflectors.

4-3.6.5 The authority having jurisdiction shall be consulted for water and arrangement requirements for either automatic sprinklers or fixed spray nozzles.

4-3.7 Light fixtures shall comply with the requirements of 2-6.2 of this standard. All switches shall be outside the vault and provided with pilot lights to indicate whether vault lights are on or off.

4-3.8 Where heat is required to prevent freezing of the sprinkler system, it shall be by hot water or low-pressure steam limited to 10 psig (69 kPa) maximum pressure. Vault temperature shall not exceed 70°F (21°C). Radiators shall be placed at the ceiling, over aisle spaces, with pipes and radiators protected by wire guards arranged so that film cannot be placed within 12 in. (30 cm) of them.

4-3.9 All film stored in vaults shall be in single- or double-roll containers or in DOT-approved shipping containers.

4-4 Archival Cabinets.

4-4.1 Archival cabinets shall be provided with individual drawers or compartments, each holding not more than 2000 ft (610 m) of film. Individual compartments shall be separated by $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (9.5 mm) of noncombustible insulating material. Each compartment shall be provided with a hinged damper or similar device to allow release of decomposition gases into the cabinet vent.

4-4.2 Archival cabinets shall be provided with automatic sprinklers when holding more than 50 lb (22.7 kg) of nitrate film.

4-4.3* Each archival cabinet having a capacity of more than 50 lb (22.7 kg) (10 standard rolls) of film shall be provided with a vent to the outside of the building. The vent shall have a minimum cross-sectional area of 14 in.² per 100 lb (0.2 cm² per kg) (200 standard rolls) of film capacity.

4-4.3.1 Decomposition vent pipes shall be of No. 18 U.S. gauge riveted steel or equivalent. Where located within the building, decomposition vent pipes shall be covered with 1 in. (2.5 cm) of noncombustible insulating material.

4-4.3.2 Where pipe lengths are longer than 10 ft (3 m), a larger size than that indicated in 4-4.3 shall be provided to take care of friction losses in the pipe.

4-5 Archival Vaults. (See Figure 4-5.)

4-5.1 Archival vaults shall be constructed according to plans submitted to and approved by the authority having jurisdiction.

4-5.1.1 Archival vaults shall not exceed 1000 ft³ (28.3 m³) in interior volume. Where the height of the vault ceiling results in a vault having an interior volume greater than 1000 ft³ (28.3 m³) or greater than the volume agreed upon by the authority having jurisdiction, the interior vault space shall be permitted to be limited as described in 4-3.1.1. (See Figure 4-5.)

4-5.1.2 Walls and floors shall be of Type I construction having a fire resistance of 4 hours. Where masonry units have cracks or holes, the surface shall be plastered on both sides with a cement plaster to a thickness of at least $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (12.7 mm). Equivalent construction that will provide equal fire resistance and prevent escape of gases through wall cracks shall be permitted to be used.

4-5.1.3 Archival vaults shall comply with 4-3.1.3, 4-3.1.4, and 4-3.1.5.

4-5.2 Door openings in archival vaults shall be protected in accordance with the requirements of 4-3.2.

4-5.3 Archival vaults shall be provided with decomposition vents meeting the requirements of 4-3.3, except as modified by 4-3.4 and 4-5.3.

(a) The vent area for a standard 1000-ft³ (28.3-m³) archival vault shall be not less than 2670 in.² (1.7 m²). (See Figure 4-3.3.2.)

(b) In no case shall the vent outlet exceed 25 ft (7.6 m) in length for a vault exceeding 1000 ft³ (28.3 m³).

Exception: In vaults provided with explosion venting, the decomposition vent shall be permitted to be omitted.

4-5.4 Archival vaults shall be provided with horizontal shelves and vertical baffles spaced so that not more than two containers, each containing 1000 ft (305 m) of film, shall be permitted to be placed in each compartment.

4-5.4.1 The spacing between shelves shall be such that the container covers can be lifted approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (12.7 mm), but cannot be lifted completely off the container.

4-5.4.2 The shelves shall be separated by vertical barriers so that not more than one container can be placed between

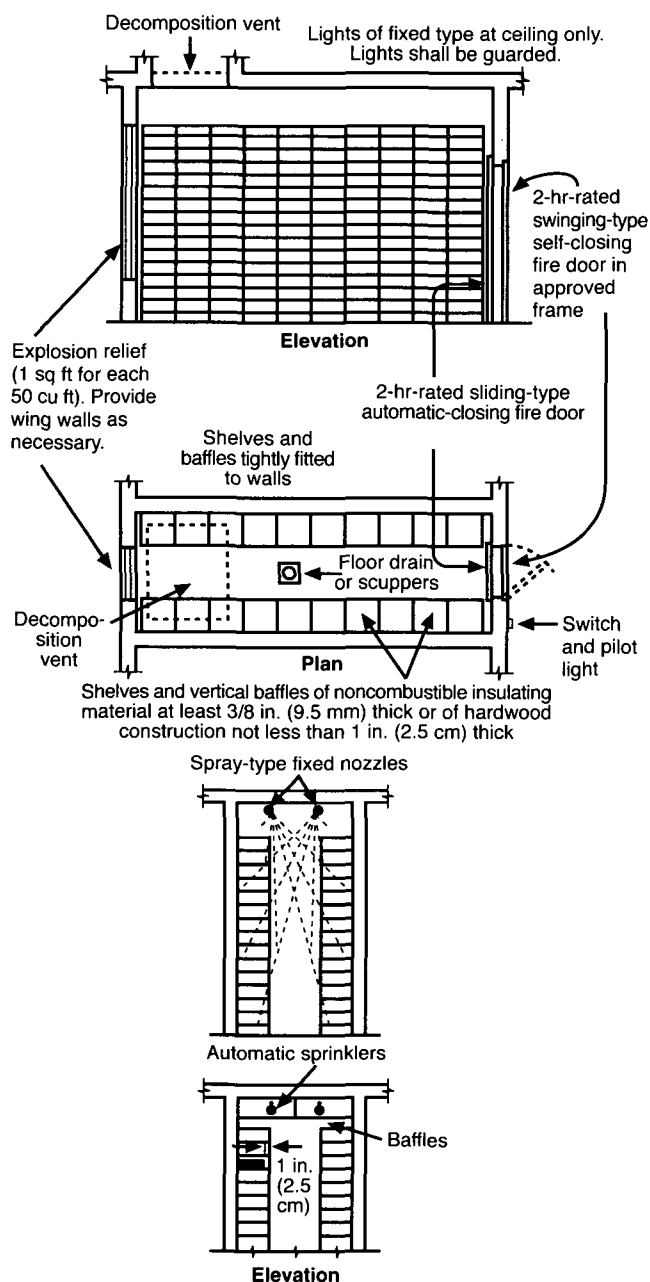


Figure 4-5 Archival vault.

vertical baffles. The vertical baffles and the shelves shall be of noncombustible insulating material at least $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (9.5 mm) thick or of hardwood construction at least 1 in. (2.5 cm) thick.

4-5.4.3 Containers shall be placed on shelves in contact with the back wall.

4-5.4.4 Racks shall be designed in relation to the sprinkler system so that the open face of each rack structure shall be protected by the sprinkler system.

4-5.5 In new archival vaults, fire protection shall be provided in accordance with 4-3.6.

Exception: As modified in 4-5.5.1 through 4-5.5.3.

4-5.5.1 Sprinklers shall be provided in a ratio of one head for each 62.5 ft³ (1.8 m³) of vault volume.

Exception: Sprinkler systems in existing archival vaults that were in compliance with the provisions of this standard at the time of installation shall be permitted to be continued in use.

4-5.5.2 The minimum number of sprinkler heads for a 1000-ft³ (28.3-m³) vault shall be 15 sprinklers.

Exception: Sprinkler systems in existing archival vaults that were in compliance with the provisions of this standard at the time of installation shall be permitted to be continued in use.

4-5.5.3 Directional sprinkler heads that will provide adequate coverage into the face of the shelves shall be provided.

4-5.6 Interior lighting for archival vaults shall comply with 4-3.7.

4-5.7 Where heat is required to prevent freezing of the sprinkler system, the heating system shall comply with 4-3.8.

4-5.8 All film stored in archival vaults shall be in single- or double-roll containers or in DOT-approved shipping containers. The cover of the container used shall not lift off when the container is properly placed in the rack.

Chapter 5 Handling of Nitrate Film

5-1* Containers Required. All nitrate film shall be kept in closed individual metal cans or DOT-approved containers unless actually being worked on or examined.

5-2 Shielding. Nitrate film shall not be placed or kept under benches, tables, or other surfaces that would shield it from sprinkler discharge.

5-3* Scrap Film.

5-3.1 Scrap nitrate film shall be kept separate from waste paper, scrap safety film, and other rubbish.

5-3.2 Scrap nitrate film shall be collected from workrooms at least once daily and removed to a room used for no other purpose. It shall be kept under water in steel drums or metal containers with tight-fitting covers.

5-3.3 Discarded film in full or partial rolls shall be kept in containers in vaults until disposal.

5-3.4 Scrap and discarded film shall be disposed of at frequent intervals. Scrap film shall not be baled or burned.

5-4 Transportation.

5-4.1 Nitrate film shall not be transported in any vehicle, aircraft, or other public conveyance used for the transportation of passengers, unless complying with DOT shipping regulations and other applicable regulations.

5-4.2 Nitrate film shall not be allowed in any underground subway train or station unless under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Transportation and conforming to DOT regulations.

Chapter 6 Motion Picture Projection and Special Processes

6-1 Enclosures for Motion Picture Projectors.

6-1.1* Motion picture projectors using nitrate film shall be operated or set up for operation only within an approved enclosure, not less than 80 ft² (7.4 m²) in area and 7½ ft (2.3 m) high. Only two machines shall be located in each such room.

6-1.2 The projection room shall have a fire resistance of not less than 1 hour. Interior finish shall have a flame spread index no greater than 25.

6-1.3* Exit doors shall be outward-swinging, self-closing, approved fire doors having a fire protection rating of not less than 1 hour. They shall be installed according to NFPA 80, *Standard for Fire Doors and Fire Windows*. Doors shall be kept closed at all times when not actually in use.

6-1.4 Two openings shall be provided for each motion picture projection room or booth: one, for the projectionist's view, shall be not larger than 200 in.² (1290 cm²); the other, for the projector itself, shall be not larger than 120 in.² (774 cm²).

6-1.4.1 Where separate slide projection, spot- or floodlight machines are installed in the same enclosure with motion picture projectors, not more than one opening for each such machine shall be provided for both the operator's view and for projection of light. Two or more projectors shall be permitted to be operated through the same opening. Such openings shall be as small as practical and shall be capable of being protected by approved automatic shutters.

6-1.5 Each opening provided in accordance with 6-1.4 shall be provided with an approved gravity shutter, set into guides not less than 1 in. (2.5 cm) at sides and bottom and overlapping the top of the opening by not less than 1 in. (2.5 cm) when closed. Shutters shall be not less than No. 10 U.S. gauge iron or equivalent. Shutters shall be suspended, arranged, and interconnected so that all openings will close upon operation of a suitable fusible or mechanical releasing device designed to operate automatically in case of fire.

6-1.5.1 Each shutter shall have a fusible link above it and there shall also be a fusible link over each upper magazine that, upon operating, will close all shutters.

6-1.5.2 Suitable means shall be provided for manually closing all shutters simultaneously from the projector head and from a point within the projection enclosure near each exit door.

6-1.6 All shelves, furniture, and fixtures within the enclosure shall be constructed of noncombustible materials.

Exception: Tables shall comply with Section 2-5.

6-1.7 No combustible material of any sort shall be permitted in the projection enclosure other than the film and film cement.

6-1.8 Ventilation shall be provided by one or more mechanical exhaust systems that shall draw air from each arc lamp housing and from one or more points near the ceiling.

6-1.8.1 Exhaust systems shall exhaust to outdoors either directly or through a noncombustible flue used for no other purpose.

6-1.8.2 Exhaust capacity shall be neither less than 15 ft³/min (0.43 m³/min) nor more than 50 ft³/min (1.4 m³/min) for each arc lamp, plus 200 ft³/min (5.7 m³/min) for the room itself.

6-1.8.3 Exhaust systems shall be controlled from within the enclosure and shall have pilot lights to indicate operation.

6-1.8.4 The exhaust system serving the projection room shall be permitted to be extended to cover rooms associated with the projection enclosure, such as rewind rooms, but shall not be connected in any way with ventilating or air conditioning systems serving other portions of the building.

6-1.8.5 No dampers shall be installed in such exhaust systems.

6-1.8.6 Exhaust ducts shall be of noncombustible material and shall either be kept 1 in. (2.5 cm) from combustible material or be covered with ½ in. (12.7 mm) of noncombustible thermal insulating material.

6-1.8.7 Fresh air intakes other than those direct to the outside shall be protected by approved fire dampers or shutters arranged to operate automatically with the shutters described in 6-1.5.

6-1.9 Provision shall be made so that auditorium lights can be turned on from within the projection enclosure and from at least one other convenient point in the building.

6-2 Processing Nitrate Film.

6-2.1 Such operations as cleaning, splicing, repairing, marking, and cataloging shall be permitted to be grouped together in common work areas but shall not be done in rooms where other operations are performed.

6-2.2 Special processes for treating nitrate film shall be provided with the safeguards to protect against the hazards involved. The authority having jurisdiction shall be consulted to determine the necessary protection.

Chapter 7 Special Occupancies

7-1 Motion Picture Theaters. Nitrate film is prohibited from occupancies that are being used as motion picture theaters.

7-2 Motion Picture Film Exchanges. Nitrate film shall not be stored or handled in film exchanges.

7-3 Motion Picture Film Laboratories.

7-3.1 The requirements of Chapter 2 also shall apply to nitrate motion picture film laboratories.

7-3.2 All buildings housing a nitrate motion picture film laboratory shall be protected throughout with an approved automatic sprinkler system.

7-3.3 The total quantity of nitrate film outside of storage cabinets or vaults shall be limited to one motion picture feature or subject per work station, not to exceed 40 standard rolls or 40,000 ft (12 192 m) in rooms where film is prepared for printing.

7-3.4 The total quantity of nitrate film not in containers in all workrooms shall not exceed two standard rolls or 2000 ft (610 m) per person handling film.

Exception No. 1: This shall not apply to film that is in process on cleaning or printing machines.

Exception No. 2: Five standard rolls or 5000 ft (1524 m) per cleaning or printing machine work station shall be permitted, provided the total does not exceed 10 standard rolls or 10,000 ft (3050 m) at any time.

7-3.5 For new installations, printing machines shall be separated from each other by noncombustible partitions, unless they are spaced so that there is a 6-ft (1.8-m) distance between the film on one machine and the film on an adjacent machine.

7-3.5.1 Partitions separating one nitrate film handling room from another shall be of Type I construction and shall have a fire resistance of not less than 1 hour.

7-3.5.2 In all cases, sprinklers shall be arranged so that not more than two machines are protected by any one sprinkler head.

7-3.6 Cabinet-type drying machines shall be listed.

7-3.7 Waxing of film shall be done in a separate room. Waxing processes that require the waxed film to be left exposed to dry shall be in a room used solely for that purpose. Not more than five machines shall be located in any one room. Not more than 10 standard rolls or 10,000 ft (3050 m) of film shall be exposed at any one time.

7-3.8 Not more than two projectors for nitrate film shall be located in any one room.

7-3.9 The shipping room shall be separated from the rest of the building by partitions complying with 2-1.2. No process other than the packing of film shall be conducted in the shipping room. Not more than 500 standard rolls or 500,000 ft (152 400 m) of film shall be in a shipping room at one time. Of this quantity, no fewer than 250 standard rolls or 250,000 ft (76 200 m) shall be in shipping cases.

Chapter 8 Referenced Publications

8-1 The following documents or portions thereof are referenced within this standard and shall be considered part of the requirements of this document. The edition indicated for each reference is the current edition as of the date of the NFPA issuance of this document.

8-1.1 NFPA Publications. National Fire Protection Association, 1 Batterymarch Park, P.O. Box 9101, Quincy, MA 02269-9101.

NFPA 13, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems*, 1994 edition.

NFPA 15, *Standard for Water Spray Fixed Systems for Fire Protection*, 1990 edition.

NFPA 70, *National Electrical Code*, 1993 edition.

NFPA 80, *Standard for Fire Doors and Fire Windows*, 1992 edition.

NFPA 90A, *Standard for the Installation of Air Conditioning and Ventilating Systems*, 1993 edition.

NFPA 101, *Life Safety Code*, 1994 edition.

NFPA 251, *Standard Methods of Fire Tests of Building Construction and Materials*, 1990 edition.

Appendix A Explanatory Material

This Appendix is not a part of the requirements of this NFPA document but is included for informational purposes only.

A-1-4.2 For example, any process in a studio that, in the opinion of the authority having jurisdiction, is similar to some process covered under laboratories would be covered by the requirements for that process given under laboratories.

A-1-6 Approved. The National Fire Protection Association does not approve, inspect, or certify any installations, procedures, equipment, or materials; nor does it approve or evaluate testing laboratories. In determining the acceptability of installations, procedures, equipment, or materials, the authority having jurisdiction may base acceptance on compliance with NFPA or other appropriate standards. In the absence of such standards, said authority may require evidence of proper installation, procedure, or use. The authority having jurisdiction may also refer to the listings or labeling practices of an organization concerned with product evaluations that is in a position to determine compliance with appropriate standards for the current production of listed items.

A-1-6 Authority Having Jurisdiction. The phrase "authority having jurisdiction" is used in NFPA documents in a broad manner, since jurisdictions and approval agencies vary, as do their responsibilities. Where public safety is primary, the authority having jurisdiction may be a federal, state, local, or other regional department or individual such as a fire chief; fire marshal; chief of a fire prevention bureau, labor department, or health department; building official; electrical inspector; or others having statutory authority. For insurance purposes, an insurance inspection department, rating bureau, or other insurance company representative may be the authority having jurisdiction. In many circumstances, the property owner or his or her designated agent assumes the role of the authority having jurisdiction; at government installations, the commanding officer or departmental official may be the authority having jurisdiction.

A-1-6 Listed. The means for identifying listed equipment may vary for each organization concerned with product evaluation, some of which do not recognize equipment as listed unless it is also labeled. The authority having jurisdiction should utilize the system employed by the listing organization to identify a listed product.

A-1-6 Standard Roll. This definition is intended to establish a measure of length and weight. It is not intended to prohibit the use of double rolls [2000 ft (610 m)] of film in theaters and exchanges.

A-2-3.1 It is suggested that, wherever practical, explosion vents be provided in existing rooms or vaults used for the storage and handling of nitrate film.

A-2-4 The purpose of this section is to prevent congestion of workers in areas where large quantities of nitrate film are handled.

A-3-1 It is recommended that buildings used for the storage or handling of nitrate film, except for buildings housing small areas possessing no fire hazard and so located that there is little opportunity for fire gases to enter the area, be completely protected by automatic sprinklers. Also, while this

section does not require automatic sprinklers for projection rooms, fire experience indicates that they do provide desirable protection and their use is advised.

A-3-3 Small hose equipment is recommended. See NFPA 14, *Standard for the Installation of Standpipe and Hose Systems*.

A-4-2.4 For long lengths of vent pipe, a larger size might be necessary to overcome friction loss and turns in the pipe.

A-4-3.2 Vaults can have two door openings. Such an arrangement is often a great convenience, as in laboratories, where the vault is located between rooms and used for temporary storage of film in process. Approved quick-operating devices for closing vault doors are recognized as having advantages over the fusible link, and their use is recommended.

A-4-3.3 The vent area requirement is equivalent to 1 in.² (6.5 cm²) for each standard roll. In determining the proper vent opening, allowance should be made for the window frame and sash, as the area of the glass is considered the effective cross-sectional area of the vent opening.

A-4-3.3.3 The extension of a vent outlet by means of flues extending a considerable distance adds appreciably to the frictional resistance and greatly decreases the effectiveness of the vents. If it is necessary to construct vents longer than 25 ft (7.6 m), proper allowance should be made for frictional losses and the cross-sectional area increased progressively to ensure adequate venting. Such cases are regarded as special and subject to the approval of the authority having jurisdiction.

A-4-3.3.5 Protection against sunlight can be obtained by painting the glass in the vent opening a dark color. One method of effecting protection from radiated heat is to use a hinged insulated or hollow metal panel as a vent. Another acceptable method that has been used employs two baffle walls inside the vault itself. The baffle wall nearer the vent should extend down from the ceiling to within 3 ft (0.9 m) of the floor; the inner baffle wall extends up from the floor to within 3 ft (0.9 m) of the ceiling. These walls should be of substantial construction and spaced and arranged to afford the full required vent area from the film storage space to the outside.

A-4-3.3.6 The use of approved quick-operating devices is recommended.

A-4-3.4 This can be achieved by providing roof parapets or extended wing walls between such openings.

A-4-3.6.3 The arrangement of sprinklers or nozzles to provide adequate distribution over the face of shelving is important and requires knowledge of sprinkler discharge patterns and locations. This should be done only by qualified personnel.

A-4-4.3 Good engineering judgment recommends that the vent lines should be no longer than 10 ft (3 m). (See NFPA 68, *Guide for Venting of Deflagrations*.)

A-5-1 This requirement is essential for life safety and from the standpoint of fire hazard.

A-5-3 Nitrate film in the form of clippings and short lengths is very hazardous. Safe precautions in the handling of such scraps are most essential. Baling and burning of film are processes presenting distinct fire hazards. Sending film to a central reclaiming plant is recommended.

A-6-1.1 For new construction, an enclosure not less than 8 ft (2.4 m) wide, 10 ft (3 m) long, and 8 ft (2.4 m) high is recommended for one projection machine, and not less than 10 ft (3 m) wide, 14 ft (4.3 m) long, and 8 ft (2.4 m) high for two machines.

A-6-1.3 For new construction, it is recommended that at least two doors be provided, each not less than 30 in. (76 cm) wide and 72 in. (183 cm) high. In all cases, it is recommended that exit requirements of the authority having jurisdiction be complied with, particularly those regarding size and locations. At least one should be of the conventional stairway type having a suitable landing at the top or opening directly into a corridor.

Appendix B Additional Information on Cellulose Nitrate Film¹

This Appendix is not a part of the requirements of this NFPA document but is included for informational purposes only.

B-1 Hazards. The most dangerous aspects of cellulose nitrate motion picture film are its ease of ignition, its very high rate of combustion, and its extremely poisonous combustion gases.

Cellulose nitrate film decomposes readily when heated to temperatures above ambient, but below its ignition temperature. The decomposition is both exothermic and autocatalytic. The quantity of heat produced by decomposition is such that, if not dissipated, it rapidly raises the temperature of the film to the ignition point. Even local heating can raise the temperature of the film to a dangerous level, initiating decomposition in the entire mass. Cellulose nitrate also contains enough oxygen within its molecule so that decomposition or combustion proceeds rapidly, even in a limited air supply. A fire in cellulose nitrate film, therefore, cannot be extinguished by smothering.

Cellulose nitrate film is not itself explosive and is less flammable than certain other nitrated compounds. Its ignition temperature is generally given as about 300°F (149°C), but the exact value depends on the duration of exposure, size and purity of film, and other factors. For example, in a laboratory test, a sample of fresh nitrate film base ignited in air at 325°F (163°C) within 80 seconds; at 400°F (204°C), ignition occurred in 10 seconds; and at 500°F (260°C), in only 3 seconds. Residual chemicals from processing, dirt, or foreign material can lower the ignition temperature. Investigations conducted after the Cleveland Clinic fire of 1929 showed that temperatures above 200°F (93°C) were unsafe for nitrate film and that exposed steam pipes and unprotected light bulbs were dangerous in rooms containing nitrate film.

Improperly cared-for nitrate film has caused fires after several hours storage at temperatures as low as 120°F (49°C). Also, spontaneous ignition is believed to have been responsible for a number of nitrate film fires that have occurred in storage vaults in the summer, following periods of 100°F (38°C) weather.²

¹ Abstracted, with permission of Eastman Kodak Company, from *Hazard in the Handling and Storage of Nitrate and Safety Motion Picture Film*, Eastman Kodak Company, Rock., NY, 1951.

² Cummings, J.W., Hutton, A.C., and Sifton, H., "Spontaneous Ignition of Decomposing Cellulose Nitrate Film," *J. Soc. Mot. Pict. and Tel. Eng.*, Vol. 54, March 1950, pp. 268-274.

The actual heat of combustion of cellulose nitrate film is low compared with that of more common fuels.

Table B-1 Heats of Combustion

Nitrate film vs Common Fuels	Btu/lb	kJ/kg
Nitrate film	6000 – 8000	13 944 – 18 921
Wood	7000 – 8000	16 268 – 18 921
Alcohol	211,620	27 005
Coal, bituminous	10,000 – 14,000	23 240 – 32 536
Gasoline	220,750	84 380

However, the rate of combustion of nitrate film is about 15 times that of wood in any form, so that the heat evolved per minute is initially much greater. This results in a rapid temperature increase and a very intense fire. A nitrate film fire burns so fiercely and spreads so quickly that it is virtually impossible to control or extinguish it except by automatic sprinklers.

B-2 Products of Combustion. When a single layer of cellulose nitrate film is ignited and allowed to burn freely in excess air, it burns with a bright yellow flame. The gases given off are colorless and are chiefly nitrogen, carbon dioxide, and water vapor, none of which is poisonous or explosive. If, however, the air supply is restricted, as is always the case where the nitrate film is in rolls, the film burns with or without flame, producing copious quantities of thick, yellow smoke. These gases are extremely poisonous and can form explosive mixtures with air. The relative amounts of the gases given off by burning nitrate film in a limited air supply are shown in Table B-2. Traces of hydrogen cyanide have also been detected, but not in significant amounts.

Table B-2 Gases Evolved in Flameless Combustion of Nitrate Film¹

Volume of combustion chamber: 8 ft³ to 27 ft³ (0.23 m³ to 0.76 m³)
Weight of film: 2 lb/ft³ (0.9 kg/m³)

Gas	Percent by Volume
Nitric oxide	1.4 – 8.2
Nitrogen dioxide and tetroxide	6.9 – 8.9
Carbon monoxide	47.7 – 59.1
Carbon dioxide	21.3 – 24.5
Oxygen	None
Hydrogen	0.9 – 3.2
Methane	1.0 – 2.7

¹From "Proceedings of a Board of the Chemical Warfare Service Appointed for the Purpose of Investigating Conditions Incident to the Disaster at the Cleveland Hospital Clinic, Cleveland, OH, on May 15, 1929," U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1929.

Complete combustion of nitrate film yields 4 ft³ to 5 ft³ of gas per lb (0.11 m³ to 0.14 m³ per kg) of film at normal temperature and pressure. The proportions of the various gases will vary somewhat with such conditions as temperature, pressure, and air supply.

B-3 Detection and Disposal of Unstable Nitrate Film. New nitrate film is made to be as stable as possible, and some nitrate films 30 or 40 years old still appear to be in reasonably good condition. However, all nitrate film deteriorates with age, and the deterioration is increased by chemical contamination and improper storage conditions. Nitrate film in an advanced stage of deterioration is less stable, ignites at lower temperatures, and is more likely to ignite spontaneously than new film.

All nitrate films that are to be saved for future reprocessing or for archive purposes should be carefully examined throughout their length prior to being stored in a vault. Further, they should be re-examined periodically. For moderate storage temperatures and where both temperature and humidity are controlled, inspections should be made at least once annually. Where conditions are not controlled, examinations should be made every six months. In tropical climates, inspection intervals might have to be decreased to two or three months.

Any films that, upon examination, show yellow discoloration, fading of the image, undue brittleness, stickiness of the emulsion, or any other signs of deterioration should be copied onto safety film and then destroyed. Any films in cans that are corroded on the inside should be treated similarly.

The disposal of deteriorated or unstable nitrate film presents a problem. It should not be mixed with regular nitrate film scrap or ordinary rubbish. Such film should be kept under water in a steel drum until disposal can be arranged. Deteriorated nitrate film should be burned, but this involves a hazard. Safe disposal should be arranged through proper authorities.

B-4 Identifying Nitrate Film. A simple, reasonably fool-proof test to distinguish nitrate film from safety base film is to punch or cut a 1/4-in. (6.4-mm) diameter sample from the film and place it in a test tube or a small bottle containing trichloroethylene. The liquid should be shaken to make sure the film sample is completely immersed. If the sample sinks, it is nitrate film; if it floats to the surface, it is safety film.

Appendix C Referenced Publications

C-1 The following documents or portions thereof are referenced within this standard for informational purposes only and thus are not considered part of the requirements of this document. The edition indicated for each reference is the current edition as of the date of the NFPA issuance of this document.

C-1.1 NFPA Publications. National Fire Protection Association, 1 Batterymarch Park, P.O. Box 9101, Quincy, MA 02269-9101.

NFPA 10, *Standard for Portable Fire Extinguishers*, 1994 edition.

NFPA 14, *Standard for the Installation of Standpipe and Hose Systems*, 1993 edition.

NFPA 68, *Guide for Venting of Deflagrations*, 1994 edition.

NFPA 220, *Standard on Types of Building Construction*, 1992 edition.

NFPA 232, *Standard for the Protection of Records*, 1991 edition.

C-1.2 Other Publications.

Hazard in the Handling and Storage of Nitrate and Safety Motion Picture Film, Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester, NY, 1951.

"Spontaneous Ignition of Decomposing Cellulose Nitrate Film," *Journal of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers*, Cummings, J.W. et al., Vol. 54, March 1950, pp. 268–274.

"Proceedings of a Board of the Chemical Warfare Service Appointed for the Purpose of Investigating Conditions Incident to the Disaster at the Cleveland Hospital Clinic, Cleveland, OH, on May 15, 1929," U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1929.

Index

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- A-**
 - Air conditioning systems** 2-8.1 to 2-8.2
 - Approved (definition)** 1-6, A-1-6
 - Archival cabinets** 4-1(c), 4-4
 - Archival film** 4-1(c)
 - Definition 1-6
 - Archival racks** 4-5.4.4
 - Definition 1-6
 - Archival vaults** 4-1(c), 4-5
 - Arrangement and applicability of standard** 1-4, A-1-4.2
 - Authority having jurisdiction (definition)** 1-6, A-1-6
- B-**
 - Buildings**
 - Construction 1-5, Chap. 2
 - Plans, approval of 1-5
- C-**
 - Cabinets, film** 4-1, 4-2, A-4-2.4
 - Archival 4-1(c), 4-4
 - Definition 1-6
 - Sprinkler systems 3-1.3
 - Cellulose nitrate film**
 - Archival 4-1(c)
 - Definition 1-6
 - Combustion products of B-2
 - Definition 1-6
 - Detection and disposal of unstable film B-3
 - Handling of *see* Handling of cellulose nitrate film
 - Hazards of B-1
 - Identification of B-4
 - Processing 6-2
 - Scrap film 5-3, A-5-3
 - Shielding film 5-2
 - Standard roll of (definition) 1-6, A-1-6
 - Storage of *see* Storage of cellulose nitrate film
 - Transportation of film 5-4
 - Construction**
 - Archival vaults 4-5.1
 - Building 1-5, Chap. 2
 - Enclosures, motion picture projector 6-1.6
 - Film cabinets 4-2.1
 - Non-archival vaults 4-3.1
 - Plans 1-5
 - Containers, film** 4-2.6, 4-3.9, 4-5.8, 5-1, A-5-1
- D-**
 - Decomposition vents** 2-1.1, 4-3.3, 4-4.3.1, 4-5.3, A-4-3.3
 - Definition 1-6
 - Definitions** 1-6, A-1-6
 - Deluge systems** 3-1.3, 4-3.6
 - Disposal/detection of unstable film** B-3
 - Doors** 2-2.3; *see also* Exits; Fire doors
 - Enclosures, motion picture projector 6-1.3, A-6-1.3
 - Vault 4-3.2, A-4-3.2
 - Duct systems** 2-8, 6-1.8.6
- E-**
 - Electrical equipment and systems** 2-6, 4-3.7, 4-5.6, 6-1.9
 - Enclosures, motion picture projector** 6-1, A-6-1.1, A-6-1.3
 - Explosion venting 2-3.1
 - Sprinkler systems 3-1.2
- Equivalency** 1-7
- Exhaust systems** 2-8, 6-1.8.6; *see also* Vents
- Exits** 2-2, 6-1.3, A-6-1.3
- Explosion vents** 2-1.1, 2-3, 4-3.3, A-2-3.1
 - Definition 1-6
- F-**
 - Film** *see* Cellulose nitrate film
 - Film cabinets** 4-2, A-4-2.4
 - Film cans** *see* Containers, film
 - Film exchanges, motion picture** 7-2
 - Film laboratories** 7-3
 - Fire doors** 2-1.3, 4-3.2, 4-5.2, 6-1.3
 - Fire extinguishers, portable** 3-3
 - Fire protection** Chap. 3, A-3-1, A-3-3; *see also* Sprinklers, automatic
 - Archival vaults 4-5.5
 - Non-archival vaults 4-3.4, 4-3.6, A-4-3.4, A-4-3.6.3
 - Fixed spray nozzles** 3-1.3
 - Flues, vent** 4-2.4.1, 4-3.3.3, A-4-3.3.3
- H-**
 - Handling of cellulose nitrate film** Chap. 5, A-5-1, A-5-3, B-1
 - Hazards of cellulose nitrate film** B-1
 - Heating equipment and systems** 2-7, 2-8.1, 4-3.8, 4-5.7
- L-**
 - Labeled (definition)** 1-6
 - Laboratories, film** 7-3
 - Listed (definition)** 1-6, A-1-6
- M-**
 - Motion picture projection** Chap. 6; *see also* Enclosures, motion picture projector
- N-**
 - Nitrate film** *see* Cellulose nitrate film
- O-**
 - Occupancies, special** 1-4.1 to 1-4.2, Chap. 7
- P-**
 - Partitions** 2-1.2 to 2-1.3, 7-3.5
 - Definition 1-6
 - Processing cellulose nitrate film** 6-2
 - Projection, motion picture** Chap. 6; *see also* Enclosures, motion picture projector
 - Purpose of standard** 1-2

-R-

Racks	2-5, 4-3.5
Archival	4-5.4.4
Definition	1-6
Retroactivity of standard	1-3
Rolls of film, standard (definition)	1-6, A-1-6

-S-

Scope of standard	1-1
Scrap film	5-3, A-5-3
Shall (definition)	1-6
Shielding film	5-2
Shipping room	7-3.9
Should (definition)	1-6
Sprinklers, automatic	3-1, A-3-1
Archival cabinet	4-4.2
Archival vaults	4-3.6, 4-5.4.4, 4-5.5, 4-5.7
Cabinets, film	4-2.5
Film laboratories	7-3.2, 7-3.5.2
Non-archival vaults	4-3.1.5, 4-3.6, A-4-3.6.3
Standard roll of film (definition)	1-6, A-1-6
Standpipe and hose systems	A-3-3
Storage of cellulose nitrate film	Chap. 4, 7-3.4, 7-3.9, B-2; <i>see also</i> Containers, film

-T-

Tables, film handling	2-5, 6-1.6
Theaters, motion picture	7-1
Transportation of film	5-4

-V-

Vaults	2-1.2, 2-2.2, 4-1, 4-3, 4-5
Archival	4-1(c), 4-5
Definition	1-6
Fire extinguishers	3-3
Lighting in	2-6.2, 4-3.7, 4-5.6
Non-archival	4-3, A-4-3
Sprinkler systems	3-1.3
Vent flues	4-2.4.1, 4-3.3.3, A-4-3.3.3
Ventilating systems	2-8, 6-1.8
Vents	4-2.4, 4-4.3, A-4-2.4, A-4-4.3; <i>see also</i> Decomposition vents; Explosion vents

-W-

Water supplies	3-2
Waxing of film	7-3.7
Workers, space for	2-4, A-2-4

The NFPA Codes and Standards Development Process

Since 1896, one of the primary purposes of the NFPA has been to develop and update the standards covering all areas of fire safety.

Calls for Proposals

The code adoption process takes place twice each year and begins with a call for proposals from the public to amend existing codes and standards or to develop the content of new fire safety documents.

Report on Proposals

Upon receipt of public proposals, the technical committee members meet to review, consider, and act on the proposals. The public proposals – together with the committee action on each proposal and committee-generated proposals – are published in the NFPA's Report on Proposals (ROP). The ROP is then subject to public review and comment.

Report on Comments

These public comments are considered and acted upon by the appropriate technical committees. All public comments – together with the committee action on each comment – are published as the Committee's supplementary report in the NFPA's Report on Comments (ROC).

The committee's report and supplementary report are then presented for adoption and open debate at either of NFPA's semi-annual meetings held throughout the United States and Canada.

Association Action

The Association meeting may, subject to review and issuance by the NFPA Standards Council, (a) adopt a report as published, (b) adopt a report as amended, contingent upon subsequent approval by the committee, (c) return a report to committee for further study, and (d) return a portion of a report to committee.

Standards Council Action

The Standards Council will make a judgement on whether or not to issue an NFPA document based upon the entire record before the Council, including the vote taken at the Association meeting on the technical committee's report.

Voting Procedures

Voting at an NFPA Annual or Fall Meeting is restricted to members of record for 180 days prior to the opening of the first general session of the meeting, except that individuals who join the Association at an Annual or Fall Meeting are entitled to vote at the next Fall or Annual Meeting.

"Members" are defined by Article 3.2 of the Bylaws as individuals, firms, corporations, trade or professional associations, institutes, fire departments, fire brigades, and other public or private agencies desiring to advance the purposes of the Association. Each member shall have one vote in the affairs of the Association. Under Article 4.5 of the Bylaws, the vote of such a member shall be cast by that member individually or by an employee designated in writing by the member of record who has registered for the meeting. Such a designated person shall not be eligible to represent more than one voting privilege on each issue, nor cast more than one vote on each issue.

Any member who wishes to designate an employee to cast that member's vote at an Association meeting in place of that member must provide that employee with written authorization to represent the member at the meeting. The authorization must be on company letterhead signed by the member of record, with the membership number indicated, and the authorization must be recorded with the President of NFPA or his designee before the start of the opening general session of the Meeting. That employee, irrespective of his or her own personal membership status, shall be privileged to cast only one vote on each issue before the Association.

Sequence of Events Leading to Publication of an NFPA Committee Document

Call for proposals to amend existing document or for recommendations on new document.



Committee meets to act on proposals, to develop its own proposals, and to prepare its report.



Committee votes on proposals by letter ballot. If two-thirds approve, report goes forward.
Lacking two-thirds approval, report returns to committee.



Report is published for public review and comment. (Report on Proposals - ROP)



Committee meets to act on each public comment received.



Committee votes on comments by letter ballot. If two-thirds approve, supplementary report goes forward. Lacking two-thirds approval, supplementary report returns to committee.



Supplementary report is published for public review. (Report on Comments - ROC).



NFPA membership meets (Annual or Fall Meeting) and acts on committee report (ROP and ROC).



Committee votes on any amendments to report approved at NFPA Annual or Fall Meeting.



Complaints to Standards Council on Association action must be filed
within 20 days of the NFPA Annual or Fall Meeting.



Standards Council decides, based on all evidence, whether or not to issue standard
or to take other action, including hearing any complaints.



Appeals to Board of Directors on Standards Council action must be filed
within 20 days of Council action.

FORM FOR PROPOSALS ON NFPA TECHNICAL COMMITTEE DOCUMENTS

Mail to: Secretary, Standards Council

National Fire Protection Association, 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, Massachusetts 02269-9101

Fax No. 617-770-3500

Note: All proposals must be received by 5:00 p.m. EST/EDST on the published proposal-closing date.

If you need further information on the standards-making process, please contact the
Standards Administration Department at 617-984-7249.

Date 9/18/93 Name John B. Smith Tel. No. 617-555-1212

Company _____

Street Address 9 Seattle St., Seattle, WA 02255

Please Indicate Organization Represented (if any) Fire Marshals Assn. of North America

1. a) NFPA Document Title National Fire Alarm Code NFPA No. & Year NFPA 72, 1993 ed.

b) Section/Paragraph 1-5.8.1 (Exception No.1)

2. Proposal recommends: (Check one) ☐ new text
☐ revised text
☒ deleted text

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Log # _____

Date Rec'd _____

3. Proposal (include proposed new or revised wording, or identification of wording to be deleted):

Delete exception.

4. Statement of Problem and Substantiation for Proposal: (Note: State the problem that will be resolved by your recommendation; give the specific reason for your proposal including copies of tests, research papers, fire experience, etc. If more than 200 words, it may be abstracted for publication.)

A properly installed and maintained system should be free of ground faults. The occurrence of one or more ground faults should be required to cause a "trouble" signal because it indicates a condition that could contribute to future malfunction of the system. Ground fault protection has been widely available on these systems for years and its cost is negligible. Requiring it on all systems will promote better installations, maintenance and reliability.

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Note 1: Type or print legibly in black ink.

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