

Sprinkler Fitter Certification Regulations - What You Need to Know

- Takes Effect July 1, 2017.
- Covers all C16 contractors and their employees who perform installations, alterations, repairs of, or adds appurtenances to water-based fire protection systems in California.
- Water-based fire protection systems include: Wet, dry, pre-action and deluge fire sprinkler systems, including small hose connections, standpipe systems, private fire service mains and their appurtenances, including hydrants and monitor nozzles, water spray systems, foam water systems, fire pumps, water storage tanks, low, medium, and high expansion foam systems, and water mist systems.
- Excludes one and two-family residential sprinkler systems and underground water supply lines to the first joint or mechanical connection at the base of the system riser, and pre-engineered systems water-based fixed extinguishing systems
- Installation includes: Work performed on the above systems that include, new installation, retrofit, alteration, or repair.
- Alteration is defined as a modification or an addition to an existing water-based fire suppression system.
- Repair is defined as “to restore to normal working condition or fix damage”.
- There are two types of certification and two types of registration.
 - Commercial Certification: The holder can install any of these systems.
 - Multifamily Residential Certification: The holder can only install in *residential* occupancy only of 3 or more dwelling units *up to 4 stories high*
 - Registered Apprentice: The holder must be enrolled and accepted in an approved California State or federally approved Fire Sprinkler Fitter Apprenticeship program.
 - Registered Trainee: A trainee who has worked less than 1 year with a certified sprinkler fitter from their date of hire.
- Certification Requirements;
 - 16 years or older
 - Completed 7,000 hours in a California State or federally approved apprenticeship program and have 5 years of experience or
 - Be the C16 license holder or
 - Provide documentation of having met the requirements of an out of state apprenticeship program that the OSFM will accept using Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS) Minimum industry Training Standards (MITC) as the evaluation.
 - Pass a written test.
- Initial waiver period:
 - During the first 180 days (July 1, 2017 –December 27, 2017): an individual may apply for Sprinkler Fitter Certification if they can verify that they have the required hours and experience in the installation of these systems. These hours and this experience must be verified by an employer (if they can get it) on the employer’s letterhead and signed under penalty of perjury.
 - Those who qualify will not have to take a test.
 - Commercial Certification: This certification requires 7,000 hours and 5 years of verified experience.
 - Multi-Family Residential Certification: This certification requires 3,500 hours and 2 years of verified experience.
 - C16’s and “Journeyman Fire Sprinkler Fitters” (graduates of an apprenticeship program) can also immediately apply for and receive a Certificate during this 180 day period and will not be required to take a test to obtain a Certificate.

- CEU's
 - Certificate holders must turn in proof of 3 units of approved Continuing Education Units (CEUs) every 3 years in order to renew their Certificate. Approved courses will be listed on the OSFM website.
 - If the continuing education requirement is not met and proof is not provided, the Certificate on that 3rd year will not be renewed and the holder will have to reapply, re-test and supply proof of having completed the missing CEU's.

- Registrations:
 - Apprentice Registration: Applicant must be 16 years or older and enrolled in a state or federally approved apprenticeship program.
 - Trainee Registration: Applicant must be 16 years or older. They can work for the first 90 days from the date of hire before they have to register. They can only have this registration for 1 year from the date of hire before they have to be enrolled in an approved apprenticeship program and registered as an apprentice, otherwise they can no longer work on an installation jobsite.

- Fees:
 - The fee for certificates and registrations as well as their renewals is \$ 150.00
 - They are valid from July 1st through June 30th of the following year.
 - Renewals are to be paid before May 1st.
 - There is a 50% late fee penalty if paid from May 1st through June 30th.
 - If not renewed by June 30th, the certificate is no longer valid and the holder must apply for a new certificate and test again. They can use their previous certificate as proof of their experience on their application.

- Employer's responsibility:
 - Ensure everyone working on their job site has and is always carrying a certification or registration card. The only exception is the trainee for the first 90 days after date of hire.
 - Notify the OSFM within 72 hrs. of any new employee hired that has a certificate, registration or is going to be a trainee to install these systems.
 - Make sure all job sites are staffed with the correct ratios of Certified Fitters to Registered Apprentices and Trainees.

- Enforcement:
 - The OSFM or any local AHJ can ask to verify cards on a job site.
 - A Notice of Violation (NOV) or Correction Order can be issued for a violation.
 - **If correction is not made in 72 hours a Stop Work Order can be issued.** *It is imperative that you research the ramifications of a "stop work order" on a job-site.*
 - The means of correction is not defined.
 - Violations can result in a suspension (for 30 days pending outcome of an investigation) , revocation, civil penalty or misdemeanor charges. Unfair business practice lawsuits can also be brought against the C16 contractor.

- Implementation Period - Key Dates
 - First 180 days (July 1,2017 – December 27, 2017): Apply for certificate without the requirement of apprenticeship experience and without taking test.
 - First year (July 1,2017 – June 30,2018): No certification card is required on jobsites.
 - From 1st year to 18 months. (July 1, 2018 – December 27, 2018 one certification card is required on each job site.
 - After 18 months, (December 28,2018), all requirements are enforced. All workers on job site are required to have cards at all times and ratios are to be enforced.