

ASSOCIATED **fire** PROTECTION

Winter Newsletter



**WINTER
SPRINKLER SYSTEM
MAINTENANCE**

**HOLIDAY
FIRE SAFETY**

**OUTDOOR
PROPANE
HEATERS**

PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Brett Straten

On March 13, 2020 AFP conducted a work from home drill with our office staff to test the company's ability to work remote. Following the success of the drill, we made the decision to continue to work remote indefinitely. AFP office employees have not been back into the office since. As the number of COVID cases continue to rise, it has proven to be the prudent decision. We pause to think of those who have been affected by this virus.

AFP continues to work hard to maintain the same level of service that our customers expect, while at the same time, keeping everyone safe. As mentioned in my past updates, we continue to invest heavily in technology and last year, we moved to a paperless solution. Our mobile platform allows technicians to exchange information directly with office personnel easily and efficiently, while eliminating the need to meet in person. While we have no doubt had some challenges, this tool has been an essential resource for the company during this time.

Looking forward, we believe investing in technology and hiring strong people is essential to our growth. Our recently released new quote system allows customers to approve their quotes online without having to print, sign, and scan. You can read more about this initiative in the newsletter. Our next project will focus on improving communication during the work order process. Customers will receive notifications when the work order is scheduled, when our technicians are enroute to your location, when the work is completed, and when the invoice is available. Customers will also be able to view work orders at any time in order to get up-to-the-minute information. Our ultimate goal is to streamline communication between our technicians in the field, our office staff and our customers by allowing everyone access to work order information in real time.

As we close out this unprecedented year there is some reason for hope. We are cautiously optimistic that a vaccine will be available next year and we hope to be able to return to some sense of normalcy. Until that time, I wish everyone a happy and healthy holiday season.

Regards,
Brett Straten
President

To keep up to date on fire protection
and safety please follow us on:



ENHANCED TECHNOLOGY

Associated Fire Protection is proud to announce our new online quote approval process.

Customers can approve their AFP quotes online

- streamlined experience - there is no need to print, sign and return quotes.
- quicker response time - quotes can be approved with a click of the button.
- timely resolution of issues - repairs and deficiencies can be resolved in a more timely manner.

The screenshot displays a web interface for quote approval. At the top, a section titled "Ready to Approve" includes the text "Does this quote look good for you? Click here to Approve and supply some additional information" and a green "Approve" button. Below this is the "Quote Details" section, which lists "Quote # 100788" and "Customer # 33963". It contains "Bill To" and "Ship To" information, both listing "Argento Fire Alarm" at "888 8888888" in "Manassas, VA 20108". A contact card for Gregory Cheff is shown, with his photo, name, address "100 Jackson Street, Paterson, NJ 07501", email "G.Cheff@associatedfire.com", and phone numbers "Mobile: 201-462-6244" and "Office: 973-494-5389 x4-1478". At the bottom, a thank-you message is followed by a "Scope of Work" section with a bullet point: "• We propose to change 10 expired Co detectors that are tied into your fire alarm system that are starting to go into trouble to alert the effective use has expired."

With our continued focus on a more efficient process and updated technology, our team and client partners can focus their energy on what matters most: retaining the investments in their buildings, life-saving equipment, and people being safer than ever.

Currently we are using this system for repairs, inspection agreements and equipment quotes. If you have any questions regarding the online quotes process please give us a call or email us at sales@associatedfire.com.

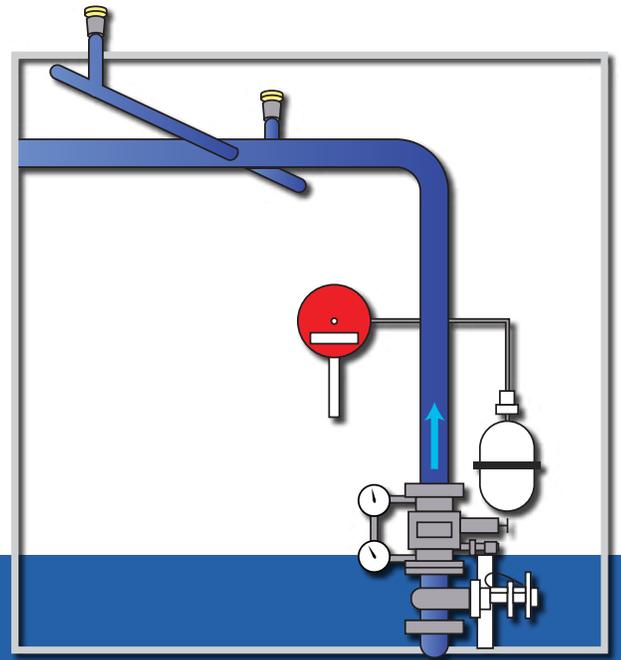
WINTER SPRINKLER SYSTEM MAINTENANCE:

TIPS FOR YOUR WET OR DRY SYSTEM

Winter weather is almost here! Now is a great time to ensure you winterize your sprinkler systems to endure lower temperatures. If you have a sprinkler system protecting your building, there are several steps that you can take to [prevent damage to your system](#) from freezing or malfunctioning when it gets too cold.

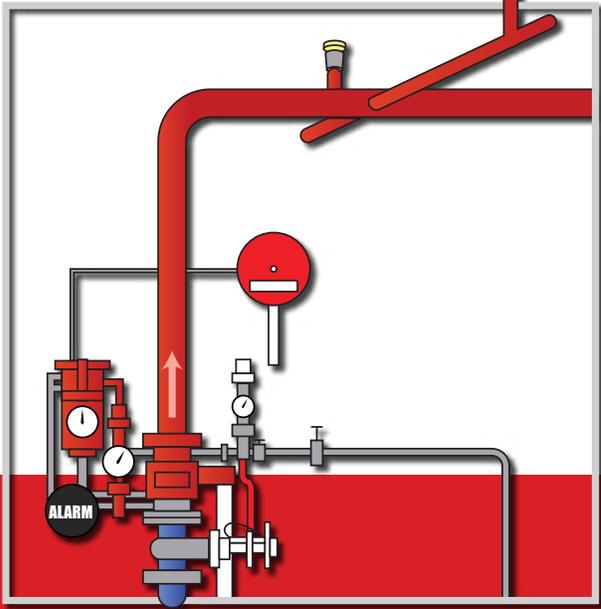
Wet Sprinkler System Maintenance

A wet sprinkler system consists of a network of pipes filled with water. During the winter months areas that contain the sprinkler piping and sprinkler valves must be kept above 32°F (0°C). This sometimes becomes an issue when a building owner decides to shut off the heat to save money in a vacant building. If any area of the pipe is exposed to freezing, it can crack and cause additional damage to the building beyond the sprinkler system.



WET PIPE SPRINKLER CHECKLIST

- Ensure the exterior of the building is in good condition; repair and close any unnecessary openings
- Maintain building heat at a minimum of 40°F in all normally heated area /areas with wet pipe sprinkler system
- Monitor coldest points of building to ensure temp is at least 40°F (i.e. eaves over shipping doors, spaces without direct heat)
- Consider low temperature alarms in problematic areas
- Identify vulnerable areas (i.e. crawl spaces, attics, above suspended ceilings where water piping pass through) and provide a way for heat to reach those areas
- Place thermostats and/or low temp alarms at strategic locations to monitor building temp
- Check insulation near wet pipe sprinkler pipes



Dry Sprinkler System Maintenance

In a dry sprinkler system, the sprinkler pipes are filled with air instead of water to protect unheated areas like parking garages or cold storage.

DRY PIPE SPRINKLER CHECKLIST

- Maintain building heat at a minimum of 40°F in all normally heated area/areas with wet pipe sprinkler system
- Check that heaters are thermostatically controlled; do not use portable heaters
- Drain all low point drains weekly during freezing weather
- Have additional drains installed if necessary
- Repair air leaks to prevent system from tripping if compressor power is lost
- Air supplied to the compressor should come from a dry, room-temp source; if not possible, consider installing an air dryer/using nitrogen

These steps toward winterizing your sprinkler system can save you thousands in water damage and or piping repairs.

Associated Fire Protection will check these items for you during our regularly scheduled inspections, but they may need to be checked more frequently depending on how many times we visit your location a year. Download our [Winterizing Sprinkler System checklist](#) to help you stay ahead of issues. If you need to keep up to date with important fire protection information please follow us on our [Facebook](#) or [Linkedin](#) page. Should you have any additional questions, please give us a call at 973-684-7250.

HOLIDAY FIRE SAFETY

Did you know that more than one-third of home decoration fires are caused by candles? Did you also know that 2 out of 5 fires happen because decorations are placed too close to a heat source?

Fire safety is always important but especially around the holidays. It's easier during this time of year to forget how quickly a fire can start when small details are overlooked. To help you stay safe during this holiday season, we're offering a few simple points to help you [avoid common holiday fire hazards](#).



HOLIDAY LIGHTS

1. Inspect lighting for worn insulation or loose light bulbs.
2. Turn the lights off before leaving the house or going to bed.
3. Don't overload electrical sockets.
4. Use clips to fasten lights instead of nails to prevent damage to the wires.
5. Make sure the lights have been lab tested and UL certified.
6. Use the appropriate outdoor extension cords for exterior lights.
7. Only use a maximum of 3 light strands together according to [Electrical Safety Foundation](#).



CHRISTMAS TREES

1. Select a tree that isn't dry with its needles browning or falling off.
2. Before placing the tree in the stand, cut 2 inches off the base of the tree for optimal watering.
3. Make sure the tree is three feet away from all heat sources like a radiators, heating ducts or fireplaces.
4. Add water to the tree every morning and every night.
5. Throw away the tree once it begins to drop needles. This indicates that it is dried out and is a real fire hazard.
6. Never use lit candles to decorate a tree.



HOLIDAY COOKING

1. Keep kitchen towels and clothing away from the stove.
2. Keep your children and pets away from the cooking area.
3. Use a cooking timer that is loud enough to hear anywhere in the house.
4. Don't use loose clothing when cooking.
5. Keep a small fire extinguisher close to the kitchen.
6. Clean the kitchen areas to avoid grease build up.



SMOKE ALARM

Check your smoke alarms to make sure they are in working order! A safe holiday makes a great holiday and practicing holiday fire safety can ensure that. Follow Associated Fire Protection on our [Facebook](#) or [LinkedIn](#) page for more helpful fire safety tips and resources.



WE HOPE YOU HAVE A HAPPY AND SAFE HOLIDAY SEASON!

PROLONGING OUTDOOR ENJOYMENT WITH PROPANE HEATERS AND HOW TO USE THEM SAFELY

Propane pedestal heaters could be the next sold-out item on the pandemic era store shelves this year, earning its spot among toilet paper, hand sanitizer, and cleaning products.

The fall weather is here with colder temperatures on the way, and homeowners and restaurant owners alike are looking for ways to prolong time outdoors as we continue to battle COVID-19. Enter the propane pedestal heater. The heat generated from these heaters allows for warmth during the cold days, so people can enjoy more outdoor dining and time on their own patios in their yards.



The propane patio heater offers a nice alternative to the traditional fire pit. The temperature is easier to control and the risk of fire is lower. Fire pits can burn hot, produce a lot of smoke, and accumulate ash and embers. The propane patio heater is controlled by a simple on and off switch.

Wayfair.com has reportedly seen a huge increase in online searches for outdoor heaters, up 70% compared to this time last year. While retailers enjoy record-breaking sales and searches for heaters by consumers and manufacturers scramble to keep up with demand, it is important to [remember to use these propane heaters safely](#).

PROPANE PEDESTAL HEATER SAFETY TIPS:



- **Remember that propane pedestal heaters are for outdoor use only.** They should not be used in a confined space, or under a tent or canopy.
- **The portable propane heater uses a propane tank in the base.** A 20 lb propane tank contains approximately 430,000 BTUs of liquid propane. A standard patio heater uses 40,000 BTUs per hour, so the propane tank will last approximately 10.75 hours per tank. Always ensure the propane tank is properly closed and stored in an upright position, away from combustible materials, away from direct sunlight, and in a well-ventilated area, preferably a detached garage or shed.
- **Choose the right heater for your space.** A typical standard size portable propane heater averages 40,000 BTUs, heating a space of approximately 20 feet in diameter. For the average homeowner, one heater is usually enough to warm you up on those chilly nights outside. If you have a large space or are looking to use a portable propane heater for commercial use, you can do some math to find out the right number of heaters needed for your space.

In order to find out how many BTUs needed to heat your space adequately, multiply the cubic footage of your location by how many degrees you want to raise the temperature. If you have a 10,000 cubic foot space and you want to raise the temperature 15 degrees, you will need 150,000 BTUs. It is important to remember to keep the proper spacing between your portable propane heaters. Be sure to check the manufacturer's instructions for more specific details.



- **Buy wisely.** Be sure your heater is commercially rated. Look for a CSA Safety rated product. The CSA Safety rating indicates the product has passed certification for safety by an independent third party.
- **Shop for a heater with a thermocouple,** which shuts off the gas if the flame goes out, due to high winds or other factors.
- **Keep a clearance** both vertically and horizontally from the heater when in use.
- **Secure the heater to prevent it from tilting.** Many models include an auto shut off if the heater tips over. Look for this feature, especially if you live in an area that is prone to high winds.
- **Cover your heater when it is not in use.** This keeps it clean and free of dust and debris that could accumulate.
- **Always store the heater in a secure spot when it is not in use.** The heater should not be left outside and exposed to the elements when not in use. Rain, sleet, and snow could damage the heater and prevent it from working properly.
- **Read directions** and always follow the manufacturer's instructions for proper use and storage of your heater.

Practicing fire safety with your propane pedestal heater will allow you to enjoy your fall and winter outdoors with peace of mind. For more fire safety tips, please visit our [website](#) or [nfpa.org](#).



SAFE ENVIRONMENT: NEW COVID PROTOCOLS

In an effort to reduce exposure and transmission of the Coronavirus or other contagions, Associated Fire Protection follows all standards and recommendations set by the [Centers of Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) and the Occupational Safety and [Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#). All AFP employees are required to abide by the following policy and procedures:

- AFP employees are required to wear rubber, latex, or nitrile gloves at all job sites and a disposable face mask.
- Employees should wash their hands frequently and thoroughly for a minimum of 20 seconds. If soap and running water are not available, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol may be used.
- Maintaining a six foot buffer in social situations
- Increased ventilation in areas to keep air moving within the environment
- Office personnel are working from home in minimize potential transmission between employees
- When out in the field, technicians drive their own separate AFP vehicles and we initiated contactless pick up of tools and equipment from our garages and warehouses.



WE ARE HIRING



We believe that our employees are our greatest asset.

We strive to be known as a great place to work with a culture and work environment that enables our employees to deliver exceptional service to our customers and support our community. If you know anyone that is looking to make a career change please have them visit our careers page at www.associatedfire.com/careers. We also offer an apprentice training program for those interested in getting into the fire protection field.