

Fire Inspector Certification Program

New Jersey Uniform Fire Code Inspector Training Program

Module 6 Inspection Overview



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Welcome

Instructor

- Before we get started
 - Has everyone signed in?
 - Anyone have any questions?

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Inspection Overview

In this module we will discuss...

- *Ethics and demeanor;*
- *Pre-inspection preparation;*
- *The inspection process*
- *Right of entry and methods;*
- *Interviewing;*
- *Documentation methods;*

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Inspection Overview

- We will also discuss...
- *On-site record reviews;*
- *Sampling and testing;*
- *Notice of Violations*
- *Report content;*
- *The inspector as a witness; and*
- *NFPA 1031 – 2014 edition*

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What is a Government Inspector?



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Fire Inspectors Must Be:

- *Professional*
- *Personable*
- *Ethical*
- *Dedicated*
- *Detailed*

You are the face of the organization



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Fire Inspectors Must Be:

- *A Good Communicator*
 - Oral
 - Written
- *Timely*
- *Organized*

You are the face of the organization



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Don't Be This Guy!



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Goals of Fire Inspections

- *Raise Fire Safety Awareness of Occupants*
- *Identify Hazards*
- *Update Information for future use*
- *Identify hazards to occupants, workers and firefighters*



Code compliance is the target

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Fire Hazard

- *Conditions, actions, or materials that may cause or contribute to the start and spread of a fire.*



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Occupancy Hazards

■ Common Hazards

- Unsafe conditions
 - Trash
 - storage
 - electrical abuse
 - clearance to combustibles



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Occupancy Hazards

■ Personal Hazards

- Unsafe actions or behaviors
- Careless smoking, open flames
- Locking/blocking doors
- Ignoring Fire Alarms



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Special Hazards

- *Hazardous Materials*
- *Flammable & Combustible liquids*
- *Explosives*
- *Dusts*
- *Toxins*
- *Pesticides*



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Property Target Hazards

- **Life Safety**
 - *Public assembly, Residential, Institutional, Educational, High Rise*
- **Property**
 - *Industrial, government, Infrastructure, chemical plants, factories*



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Fire Inspection Objectives

- *Separation of potential ignition sources from potential fuels and hazardous acts that may bring them together*
- *Ensure the safety of occupants should a fire emergency occur making sure egress is open, properly designed, and protected*
- *Ensuring both passive and active fire protection features are properly operating and inspected / tested*

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In House Preparation

- Research site thoroughly...
 - Type of operation
 - Age of operation/structure
 - Permits/LHU
 - Past violation history
 - Fire incidents, spills
 - Alarm or sprinkler activations,
- Touch base with other offices...
 - Past history
 - Licenses/approvals
 - Building permits
 - Health hazards



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File Review

■ ALWAYS LOOK IN THE FILE!!!

■ Essential File Information:

- Business name
- Street address
- Owners name
- Lot & block
- Registered agent
- Contact telephone numbers



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File Review

■ Helpful Information

- Building height
- Building area
- Type construction
- Type heat
- Service locations
- Occupant loads
- Hours of operation
- Hazardous materials

- Right to know information
- Fire protection systems
- Roof coverings
- Emergency generators
- Approved code variations
- Number of employees
- Guards or dogs on premises
- Emergency firefighting information
- Handicapped occupants

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Field preparation

■ Perform a pre-inspection reconnaissance...

- Observe the site from public way
- Orient yourself for when you are inside
- What's the neighborhood like?



■ Prepare your inspection tools...

- Clipboard/paperwork
- Tape measure
- Camera
- Flash light
- etc.



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Field Preparation-Safety

- Hard hat
- Safety glasses
- PPE (depending on site)
- Safety footwear
- Gloves
- Respiratory protection as necessary



These items required to be provided by the business

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Entry: Easy and Otherwise

■ The four commandments...

- Be nice. If that fails,
- Be kind. If that fails,
- Be fair. If that fails,
- Seek control.



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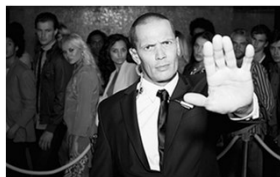
Inspection Procedure:

- *Show your official credentials*
- *Explain the scope of your inspection*
- *In the opening conference learn more about the facility's operation*
- *Discuss facility safety requirements*
- *Identify records you will want to review*
- *Explain how you intend to document the inspection*
- *Do not give up your ability to collect or review enforceable documentation*

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What if they say...NO!

- *Can an inspection be refused?*
- *If it is, is that a violation?*
- *What should you do now?*



Review 5:70-2

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When have you been denied entry?

- *When they say you are denied or they refuse entry to a building area.*
- *You must first follow proper Right of entry procedures.*

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Entry denial test number 1

1. *Did you enter through the main gate or office?*
2. *Did you locate and identify yourself to a person in charge as soon as you arrived?*
3. *Did you explain the legal basis for your inspection?*
4. *Did you explain the scope of your inspection?*
5. *Did you visit the facility at normal business hour?*

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Note...

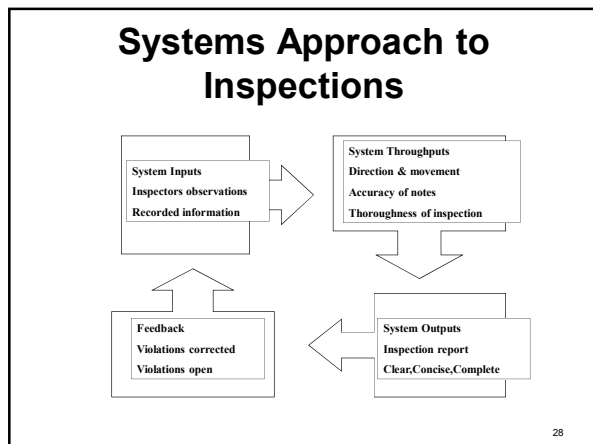
- *Expressed consent is not always necessary.*
- *Areas or buildings "open to the public" may be inspected in public permitted areas without the owners consent*
- *The absence of expressed denial constitutes consent to proceed with the inspection.*

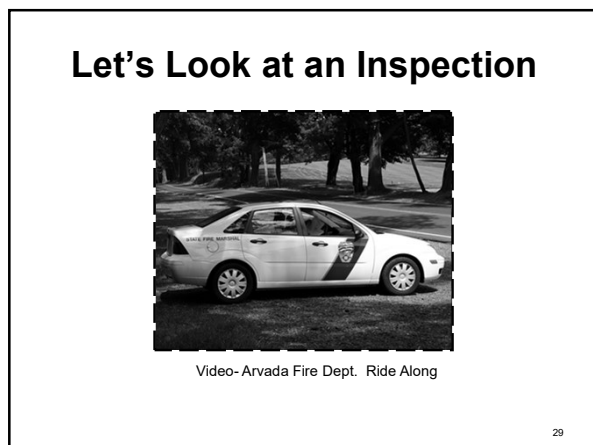
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Entry denial test number 2

- *Were you denied consent upon entry?*
- *Were unreasonable delays required?*
- *Were conditions of the inspection altered by the company or person in charge?*
- *Was your safety deliberately threatened in any way?*

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Inspection Tour:

■ Exterior:

- Location & fire department access
- General grounds and conditions
- Service and utility connections
- Overhead obstructions
- Outbuildings and storage yards
- Fire department sprinkler/standpipe connections
- Fire hydrants and yard hydrants
- Exit discharges and lighting




Inspection Tour:

■ Roof Examination:

- Roof Access
- Roof Structures
- Duct and vent discharges
- Kitchen exhausts
- Lightening protection
- Covering
- Parapets
- Firewalls



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Inspection Tour:

■ Interior Examination

- Determine the building orientation to street or landmarks
- Move in systematic pattern
- Make observations in a systematic pattern
- Record inspection results



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Inspection Observations:

- Ceiling condition
- Wall condition
- Floor condition
- Fire protection features
- Fire alarm features
- Means of egress
- General housekeeping
- Special hazards



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Closing Interview:

■ A major tool in conducting an inspection

■ Record in your notebook:

- Who were you talking to,
- What did you ask them,
- What did they answer.



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Closing Interview:

- Start on a positive note
- Establish repair priority
- Don't be argumentative
- Advise on extension and appeal rights
- Leave a business card
- Answer all questions
- Be a Fire Prevention Salesman



Fire Inspection Report:

■ Violation format:

– Violation format:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| ■ Action | Repair |
| ■ Violation | Exit sign |
| ■ Location | Second floor at north stair |
| ■ Code citation | NJAC 5:70-3 -1031.7 |



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NJ Inspection Form

This form must be completed on Every fire inspection

The form is titled 'INSPECTION REPORT' and includes sections for:

- General Information: Name of Property, Address, City, State, Zip, County, and Date of Inspection.
- Inspector Information: Name, Title, and Signature.
- Fire Detection Systems: A table for listing systems like Smoke, Heat, and Combination, with columns for Type, Location, and Status.
- Permits: A section for listing permits, including Fire Department, Building, and Electrical, with columns for Permit Number, Issued Date, and Expiration Date.
- Violations: A section for listing violations, including Code Reference, Description, and Abatement Date.

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NJ Inspection Form

VIOLATION FORM

Action

Location

Violation

Code requirement

Abatement date

The form is titled 'FIRE CODE VIOLATIONS' and includes a table for recording violations. The table has columns for:

- Action: A dropdown menu with options like 'Corrected', 'Noted', 'Abated', etc.
- Location: A dropdown menu with options like 'Kitchen', 'Bathroom', 'Bedroom', etc.
- Violation: A dropdown menu with options like 'Smoke Detector', 'Carbon Monoxide', etc.
- Code Reference: A dropdown menu with options like 'NJ A.C. 5-70-1', etc.
- Abatement Date: A date field.

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Fire Inspection Report:

■ Written Notice

- Owner, responsible party, or registered agent
- Code sections under violation
- Description of required repair
- Reasonable time to correct
- Rights of time extension
- Rights of appeal

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Issuing Violation Notices

When a violation notice is necessary it must be completed thoroughly and accurately. If you expect compliance it must be understandable.

'Service of notices and orders' section of the NJIFC, N.J.A.C. 5:70-2.11

(Let's Review this section) Use forms

And it must be able to withstand scrutiny at a Board of Appeals hearing.

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Other Considerations

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Photographic Documentation

- *Excellent physical evidence*
- *Take as many as are needed to document every aspect of the potential compliance issue*
- *Photographs should not be taken with cell phones as they may become discoverable evidence*

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Photographic documentation

The major test a photograph must satisfy....

"Is this photograph a true and accurate representation of what you saw on the specified date?"



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Photographic Documentation

- *Maintain awareness of trade secrets—photography may not be permitted in some areas of the premises*
- *Some sites may require you to sign nondisclosure statements to take photographs*

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Records

- *Inspecting records can be an art*
- *All observed records related to compliance should be documented*
- *Find out who is responsible for the records, where they are, what format they are in*
- *Review the records or have copies provided to the Fire Code Official*

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Hazardous Materials

- Under **Chapter 50** certain records must be maintained by the operators including
 - *Hazardous Materials Management Plans*
 - *Hazardous Materials Inventory Sheets*
 - *SDS safety information*
 - *Training Records*
 - *Equipment annual test records*
 - *Control limit switches, alarms, gas detection systems etc.*

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Type of Records

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ■ Fire alarm test records | ■ Safety data sheets |
| ■ Fire drill records | ■ Fire extinguisher records |
| ■ Fire sprinkler test reports | ■ Air balancing records |
| ■ Fire pump test reports | ■ Hood cleaning schedules |
| ■ Kitchen system test reports | ■ Fire damper test records |
| ■ Employee training reports | ■ Smoke control manuals |
| ■ Fire safety plans | ■ Smoke control test records |
| ■ Fire evacuation plans | ■ Interior finish records |
| ■ Right to know records | ■ Equipment manuals |
| ■ Certificates of fire treatments | ■ Building permits |
| ■ Fire safety permits | ■ Certificates of approval |
| ■ Generator test reports | ■ Occupancy records |

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Report writing

- Watch what you say or write. It could haunt you later
- | Potentially bad words/phrases | Better words/phrases |
|-------------------------------|---|
| ■ All | – of those reviewed |
| ■ Always | – usually or normally |
| ■ Never | – not reported/observed |
| ■ Violations | – it appeared that there were violations |
| ■ No violations | – it appeared that there were no violations |

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Fire Inspection Report:

- *Compliance re-inspection date*
- *Accurate record of inspection history*
- *Useful information for future inspections*
- *Assists in directing prevention efforts*

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Report content and style

- *Write the report as you did the inspection*
- *Write the report in 'first person, singular'*
- *Good reports are not great prose*
- *Avoid drawing conclusions*
- *Avoid making assumptions*
- *Stick to the facts you observed!*

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The inspector as a witness

- *Well documented cases tend to be settled out of court*
- *The Fire Inspector will usually be a 'fact witness'*
- *The judge determines competency of the witness*
- *The defense is supposed to attack the prosecutor's case – i.e., YOU!*
- *Stick to what you know and don't elaborate, you cannot give opinion unless declared an expert by the judge.*

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The inspector as a good witness

- *Tell the truth, even if it hurts, if they ask closed questions, they know the answer already*
- *Only answer the question that was asked*
- *Know when to shut up*
- *You may refer to reports and photos to refresh your memory*
- *Your attorney can help you prepare.*

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Knowledge, Skills & Ability

■ **Fire Cause:**

- *The set of conditions that brought the elements of fire together to start the process of combustion*

- **Fuel**
- **Heat**
- **Hazardous Acts**



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NFPA 1031

Standard for Professional Qualifications

Fire Inspector I

Fire Inspector II

Other Certification Examinations

CFPS- Certified Fire Protection Specialist

CFI – Certified Fire Investigator

CFEI – Certified Fire & Explosive Investigator

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Summary

In this module we discussed...

- *Ethics and demeanor;*
- *Pre-inspection preparation;*
- *Right of entry and methods;*
- *Interviewing;*
- *Documentation methods;*

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Summary

We also discussed...

- *On-site record reviews;*
- *Sampling and testing;*
- *Report content;*
- *The inspector as a witness; and*
- *NFPA 1031 2014 edition*

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Review Questions

- *See Student Manual for Review Questions*

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Next Lesson

Module 7

Building Construction and Plan Review

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End of Module

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