

Spare Sprinkler Head Inventory

NFPA 13, Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems, published by the National Fire Protection Association, requires that facilities maintain an inventory of spare sprinkler heads of like kind and type representative of the heads installed. This handout summarizes the requirements of the NFPA 13 related to sprinkler head inventory and provides guidance on the sprinkler head color coding system.

Inventory Requirements

Section 6.2.9 of NFPA 13 requires that facilities maintain a stock of spare sprinkler heads along with the appropriate sprinkler head wrenches. At least six spare sprinkler heads, but not less than two of each type and temperature rating, should be available. Additional sprinkler heads are required when the total number of sprinkler heads on site exceeds 300. For 300 to 1000 sprinkler heads, a minimum of 12 spare heads should be provided. Where more than 1000 sprinkler heads are present, a minimum of 24 spare heads should be provided.

Exceptions

Where dry type sprinklers of different lengths are installed, NFPA 13, subsection 6.2.9.4 allows that a stock of spare sprinklers is not required, provided that means to return the system to service is provided. Requirements for spare heads for sprinkler systems used in marine applications is contained in subsection 17.2.3. This section simply requires that a supply of heads be maintained and that, when less than 6 heads are installed in a system, one spare should be available for each sprinkler head installed. Additionally, there should be a spare gasket for every fire department connection present.

Sprinkler Head Storage

Spare sprinkler heads should be kept on site for the replacement of damaged or activated heads. Sprinkler heads should be stored in a cabinet in an area where the ambient temperature will not exceed 100°F (38°C).

Sprinkler Head Color Coding

Sprinkler heads, other than ornamental or plated heads, should be color coded, as outlined in NFPA 13, subsection 6.2.5. The color identification may be by a single dot on the deflector, painting of the toggle arms, or for bulb type sprinklers, the color of the glass bulb.

The color-coding by temperature-classification is as follows:

- Ordinary, 135-170°F (57-77°C): uncolored or black arms; Orange or Red glass bulb.
- Intermediate, 175-225°F (79-107°C): White arms; Yellow or Green glass bulb.
- High, 250-300°F (121-149°C): Blue arms; Blue glass bulb.
- Extra High, 325-375°F (163-191°C): Red arms; Purple glass bulb.
- Very Extra High, 400-475°F (204-246°C): Green arms; Black glass bulb.
- Ultra High, 500-650°F (260-343°C): Orange arms; Black glass bulb.

NFPA requires that facilities maintain an inventory of spare sprinkler heads of like kind and type representative of the heads installed.

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