

# WHAT IS A STANDARD?

INTRODUCTION TO LIFE SAFETY & BUILDING CODE SERIES BY MEYERFIRE UNIVERSITY | FEBRUARY 2023

## SUMMARY

A standard is a published document that details *how* design & installation of a system or component is to be achieved. In general, a **building code will discuss when or if** something is to be required, whereas a **standard will discuss how** that system is to be designed. A few common examples:

- The International Building Code (IBC) is a building **code**. It determines *when* a fire sprinkler system is required. It invokes NFPA 13 as the standard which describes *how* a fire sprinkler system is to be designed and installed. [IBC 2021 > Section 903.2 and 903.3.1 > NFPA 13]
- The International Building Code determines *when* a fire standpipe system is required. It invokes NFPA 14 as the standard which describes *how* a fire standpipe system is to be designed and installed. [IBC 2021 > Section 905.2 > NFPA 14]
- The International Building Code determines *when* a fire alarm system is required. It invokes NFPA 72 as the standard which describes *how* a fire alarm system is to be designed and installed. [IBC 2021 > Section 907.2 > NFPA 14]

Many people may not know that the edition of the required standard is referenced with the IBC. Chapter 35 of the IBC includes a long list of all the standards which are referenced in the IBC, and the applicable editions of those standards.



The 2021 IBC determines *when* a fire alarm system is required, then invokes NFPA 72 (2019 Edition) for *how* to design and install the system.

## CODE/STANDARD REFERENCES



- IBC – 2021: Section 903.2 - When Fire Sprinkler Systems are Required
- IBC – 2021: Section 903.3.1 - Applicable Standards for Fire Sprinkler Systems
- IBC – 2021: Section 905.2 - When Fire Standpipe Systems are Required
- IBC – 2021: Section 907.2 - When Fire Alarm Systems are Required
- IBC – 2021: Chapter 35 – A list of standards, and their editions, that are referenced by the IBC

## VIDEO LINK

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