

# THE LOSS PREVENTION BULLETIN

JUNE, 2008

## SPRINKLER PROBLEMS

In May, 2008 the U.S. Fire Administration's National Fire Academy presented a "Coffee Break Training" item with the learning objective of helping the professional fire protection trainee to identify the minimum requirements for annual sprinkler inspection. It is a maintenance tip of great value and importance to the engineering function within the lodging industry.

If visual inspection of a sprinkler head indicates discoloration, it may be a warning of what may be an impending problem; a water leak or sprinkler failure that will result in significant and unexpected damage to the contents of a given section of the property. The orange hue in the water droplets may suggest this is a problem with the iron pipe connecting the sprinkler, and not the sprinkler itself, but that can be determined only by closer inspection and repair or replacement. NFPA 25, *Standard for the Inspection, Testing and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems*, requires that sprinklers be inspected annually as part of the overall sprinkler system inspection process.

Here are some critical items the inspector must check:

- Sprinklers must not show signs of leakage; must be free of corrosion, foreign materials, paint, or physical damage; and must be installed in the proper orientation in accordance with their listing. Any sprinkler suffering from those conditions must be replaced.
- Glass bulb sprinklers must be replaced if the bulbs have lost their fluid contents. • Unacceptable obstructions to spray patterns must be corrected.
- The supply of spare sprinklers must be inspected annually for the proper number and type of sprinklers and a sprinkler wrench for each type of sprinkler.

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### **Sprinklers**

*For archived downloads, go to: [www.usfa.dhs.gov/nfa/coffee-break/](http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/nfa/coffee-break/)*