



CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS

June 25, 2004

Robert W. Smith  
Environmental Scientist  
Colorado Springs Utilities  
Customer Operations  
2855 Mesa Road  
Colorado Springs, CO 80904

Subject: CSFD Requirements for Backflow Prevention Device Testers

Dear Robert:

This letter is regarding individuals or companies that perform periodic testing of water backflow prevention devices that are installed on automatic fire suppression systems. The CSFD does require that these individuals be certified through Colorado State-approved methods to perform this type of testing, but does not require them to be FSC-A licensed. The CSFD recommends, but will not require that these individuals carry general liability insurance similar to a licensed contractor. It is possible that a backflow tester or company could be deemed to be liable for fire suppression system failure due to improper re-activation of the system after testing. In this situation there seems to be no avenue of financial recourse for the affected property owner of such a facility, for their insurance carrier to pursue financial reimbursement from the tester, or for the testing company to compensate for damages. The CSFD also recommends that backflow prevention device testers clearly notify the owner that they are not testing and tagging the entire sprinkler system and that the rest of the system must be tested as well, to avoid confusion as to whether or not the entire suppression system has been cleared for service.

The CSFD recognizes that the likelihood of a suppression system failing to be reactivated and a fire event both occurring before the property owner or their maintenance staff identifies that their suppression system is out of service is low. A building owner or their contracted maintenance staff is required by codes and standards to perform periodic inspections of their suppression system, as well as system testing on a regular basis to validate its functionality. Also, suppression systems monitored through a fire alarm system should notify responsible parties that the suppression system is out of service.

Should you have any questions or inquiries regarding the above statement, please feel free to contact the CSFD Fire Prevention Division at 385-5959.

Sincerely,



John Gleason

Fire Protection Engineer  
CSFD Fire Prevention Division

cc: Lacey, Brett. CSFD Fire Marshal  
Cooper, Kris. CSFD Engineering Section Manager, Fire Prevention Division

