

NFPA 16

Standard for the Installation of Deluge Foam-Water Sprinkler Systems

1999 Edition



National Fire Protection Association, 1 Batterymarch Park, PO Box 9101, Quincy, MA 02269-9101
An International Codes and Standards Organization

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NFPA 16

Standard for the

Installation of Foam-Water Sprinkler and Foam-Water Spray Systems

1999 Edition

This edition of NFPA 16, *Standard for the Installation of Foam-Water Sprinkler and Foam-Water Spray Systems*, was prepared by the Technical Committee on Foam-Water Sprinklers, released by the Technical Correlating Committee on Automatic Sprinkler Systems, and acted on by the National Fire Protection Association, Inc., at its Fall Meeting held November 16–18, 1998, in Atlanta, GA. It was issued by the Standards Council on January 15, 1999, with an effective date of February 4, 1999, and supersedes all previous editions.

This edition of NFPA 16 was approved as an American National Standard on February 4, 1999.

Origin and Development of NFPA 16

The first standard involving foam-water sprinkler systems was published in 1954 by the National Board of Fire Underwriters (now American Insurance Association) and was titled *Standard for Combined Foam- and Water-Spray Systems*. The NFPA Technical Committee on foam-water sprinklers was established in 1959 with assistance from the NBFU. The first edition of this standard was published in 1962.

Various updates to the standard were completed in 1968, 1974, 1988, and 1990. Changes were made to recognize the use of new foam concentrates and to improve the language and format of the document.

The 1995 edition included clarification of the scope of the standard, improvements to the hydraulic design criteria, and recognition of a fourth proportioning method.

The 1999 edition combines the previous text of NFPA 16 and NFPA 16A into one comprehensive document. Numerous editorial changes have also been instituted.

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Committee Scope: This Committee shall have primary responsibility for documents on the protection of hazards by systems designed to function as both sprayed foam and water discharge, as from a sprinkler system.

Contents

Chapter 1 General Information	16- 5	Chapter 4 System Design and Installation	16-10
1-1 Scope	16- 5	4-1 General	16-10
1-2 Purpose	16- 5	4-2 Working Plans and Specifications	16-10
1-3 Definitions	16- 5	4-3 Design Criteria	16-10
1-4 General System Information	16- 6	4-4 Hydraulic Calculations	16-11
1-5 Applicability	16- 7		
1-6 Approvals	16- 7	Chapter 5 Acceptance Tests	16-13
1-7 Units	16- 7	5-1 Flushing of Supply Piping	16-13
		5-2 Hydrostatic Pressure Tests	16-13
Chapter 2 System Components	16- 8	5-3 System Tests Discharging Foam From Foam-Water Deluge and Spray Systems	16-13
2-1 Approved Devices and Materials	16- 8	5-4 Proportioning System Testing	16-13
2-2 Discharge Devices	16- 8	5-5 Instructions	16-13
2-3 Foam Concentrates	16- 8		
2-4 Foam Concentrate Proportioning Means	16- 8	Chapter 6 Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance . . .	16-13
2-5 Foam Concentrate Pumps	16- 8	6-1 Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Foam-Water Sprinkler Systems	16-13
2-6 Power Supply and Controller	16- 8	6-2 Testing and Inspection of Alarm and Detection Devices	16-13
2-7 Foam Concentrate Storage Tanks	16- 8	6-3 Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance Frequency	16-13
2-8 Piping, Valves, Pipe Fittings, and Hangers . .	16- 9		
2-9 Location	16- 9	Chapter 7 Referenced Publications	16-13
2-10 Alarms	16- 9		
2-11 Strainers for Foam Concentrates	16- 9	Appendix A Explanatory Material	16-14
2-12 Supervision	16- 9		
2-13 Test Connections	16- 9	Appendix B Referenced Publications	16-26
		Index	16-26
Chapter 3 Water Supplies	16- 9		
3-1 Water Quality	16- 9		
3-2 Water Supply Capacity, Pressure, and Duration	16- 9		

NFPA 16

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Foam-Water Spray Systems

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NOTICE: An asterisk (*) following the number or letter designating a paragraph indicates that explanatory material on the paragraph can be found in Appendix A.

Information on referenced publications can be found in Chapter 7 and Appendix B.

Chapter 1 General Information

1-1 Scope.

1-1.1 This standard contains minimum requirements for the design, installation, and maintenance of foam-water sprinkler and spray systems. These systems shall be designed with the required density for either foam or water application as the controlling factor, depending on the design purpose of the system. It is not the intent of this standard to specify where foam-water sprinkler and spray protection is required. The determination of where foam-water sprinklers and spray systems are required shall be made in accordance with such applicable standards as NFPA 30, *Flammable and Combustible Liquids Code*, and NFPA 409, *Standard on Aircraft Hangars*.

1-1.2* This standard shall apply only to systems using low-expansion foam.

1-2* Purpose.

1-2.1 The purpose of this standard is to provide a reasonable degree of protection for life and property from fire through installation requirements for foam-water sprinkler and spray systems based on sound engineering principles, test data, and field experience.

Nothing in this standard is intended to restrict new technologies or alternate arrangements, provided the level of safety prescribed by the standard is not lowered.

1-2.2 Unless otherwise noted, the provisions of this document are not intended to be applied to facilities, equipment, structures, or installations that were existing or approved for construction or installation prior to the effective date of the document, except in those cases where it is determined by the authority having jurisdiction that the existing situation involves a distinct hazard to life or adjacent property.

1-3 Definitions.

Approved.* Acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction.

Authority Having Jurisdiction.* The organization, office, or individual responsible for approving equipment, an installation, or a procedure.

Class A Fires. Fires in ordinary combustible materials, such as wood, cloth, paper, rubber, and many plastics.

Class B Fires. Fires in flammable liquids, oils, greases, tars, oil base paints, lacquers, and flammable gases.

Density. The unit rate of liquid application to an area, expressed in [gpm/ft² (L/min·m²)].

Discharge Devices.* A device designed to discharge water or foam-water solution in a predetermined, fixed, or adjustable pattern. Examples include, but are not limited to, sprinklers, spray nozzles, and hose nozzles.

Foam.* Within the scope of this standard, a stable aggregation of small bubbles of lower density than oil or water that exhibits a tenacity for covering horizontal surfaces. Air foam is made by mixing air into a water solution containing a foam concentrate by means of suitably designed equipment. It flows freely over a burning liquid surface and forms a tough, air-excluding, continuous blanket that seals volatile combustible vapors from access to air. It resists disruption from wind and draft or heat and flame attack, and is capable of resealing in case of mechanical rupture. Fire-fighting foams retain these properties for relatively long periods of time. Foams also are defined by expansion and are arbitrarily subdivided into three ranges of expansion. These ranges correspond broadly to certain types of usage described below. The three ranges are as follows:

- (a) Low-expansion foam — expansion up to 20
- (b) Medium-expansion foam — expansion from 20 to 200
- (c) High-expansion foam — expansion from 200 to 1000

Foam Concentrates. A concentrated liquid foaming agent as received from the manufacturer. For the purpose of this document, “foam concentrate” and “concentrate” are used interchangeably.

(a) *Protein-Foam Concentrates.* Protein-foam concentrates consist primarily of products from a protein hydrolysate, plus stabilizing additives and inhibitors to protect against freezing, to prevent corrosion of equipment and containers, to resist bacterial decomposition, to control viscosity, and to otherwise ensure readiness for use under emergency conditions. They are diluted with water to form 3 percent to 6 percent solutions depending on the type. These concentrates are compatible with certain dry chemicals.

(b) *Fluoroprotein-Foam Concentrates.* Fluoroprotein-foam concentrates are very similar to protein-foam concentrates as described above, but with a synthetic fluorinated surfactant additive. In addition to an air-excluding foam blanket, they also can deposit a vaporization-preventing film on the surface of a liquid fuel. They are diluted with water to form 3 percent to 6 percent solutions depending on the type. These concentrates are compatible with certain dry chemicals.

(c) *Synthetic-Foam Concentrates.* Synthetic-foam concentrates are based on foaming agents other than hydrolyzed proteins and include the following:

1. *Aqueous Film-Forming Foam (AFFF) Concentrates.* These concentrates are based on fluorinated surfactants plus foam stabilizers and usually diluted with water to a 1 percent, 3 percent, or 6 percent solution. The foam formed acts as a barrier both to exclude air or oxygen and to develop an aqueous film on the fuel surface capable of suppressing the evolution of fuel vapors. The foam produced with AFFF concentrate is dry chemical compatible and thus is suitable for combined use with dry chemicals.
2. *Medium- and High-Expansion Foam Concentrates (usually derived from hydrocarbon surfactants).* These concentrates are used in specially designed equipment to produce foams having foam-to-solution volume ratios of 20:1 to approximately 1000:1. This equipment can be air-aspirating or blower-fan type. Guidance for the use of these materials is provided in NFPA 11A, *Standard for Medium- and High-Expansion Foam Systems*.

3. *Other Synthetic Foam Concentrates.* Other synthetic foam concentrates also are based on hydrocarbon surface active agents and are listed as wetting agents, foaming agents, or both. In general, their use is limited to portable nozzle foam application for spill fires within the scope of their listings. The appropriate listings shall be consulted to determine proper application rates and methods. (See NFPA 18, *Standard on Wetting Agents*.)

(d) *Film-Forming Fluoroprotein (FFFP) Foam Concentrates.* These concentrates use fluorinated surfactants to produce a fluid aqueous film for suppressing hydrocarbon fuel vapors. This type of foam utilizes a protein base plus stabilizing additives and inhibitors to protect against freezing, corrosion, and bacterial decomposition, and it also resists fuel pickup. The foam is usually diluted with water to a 3 percent or 6 percent solution and is dry chemical compatible.

(e) *Alcohol-Resistant Foam Concentrates.* These concentrates are used for fighting fires on water-soluble materials and other fuels destructive to regular, AFFF, or FFFP foams, as well as for fires involving hydrocarbons. There are three general types. One is based on water-soluble natural polymers, such as protein or fluoroprotein concentrates, and also contains alcohol-insoluble materials that precipitate as an insoluble barrier in the bubble structure.

The second type is based on synthetic concentrates and contains a gelling agent that surrounds the foam bubbles and forms a protective raft on the surface of water-soluble fuels; these foams can also have film-forming characteristics on hydrocarbon fuels. The third type is based on both water-soluble natural polymers, such as fluoroprotein, and contains a gelling agent that protects the foam from water-soluble fuels. This foam can also have film-forming and fluoroprotein characteristics on hydrocarbon fuels. Alcohol-resistant foam concentrates are generally used in concentrations of 3 percent to 10 percent solutions, depending on the nature of the hazard to be protected and the type of concentrate.

Foam Solution. A homogeneous mixture of water and foam concentrate in the proper proportions. For the purposes of this document, "foam solution" and "solution" are used interchangeably.

Foam-Water Deluge System.* A foam-water sprinkler system employing open discharge devices, which are attached to a piping system that is connected to a water supply through a valve that is opened by the operation of a detection system, which is installed in the same areas as the discharge devices. When this valve opens, water flows into the piping system and discharges from all discharge devices attached thereto.

Foam-Water Dry Pipe System.* A sprinkler system employing automatic sprinklers or nozzles that are attached to a piping system that contains air or nitrogen under pressure, the release of which (as from the opening of a sprinkler) permits the water pressure to open a valve known as a dry pipe valve. The water then flows into the piping system and out the opened sprinklers.

Foam-Water Preaction System.* A sprinkler system employing automatic sprinklers or nozzles attached to a piping system containing air that might or might not be under pressure, with a supplemental detection system installed in the same area as the sprinklers. Actuation of the detection system opens a valve that permits water to flow into the sprinkler piping system and to be discharged from any sprinklers that have activated.

Foam-Water Spray System.* A special system that is pipe-connected to a source of foam concentrate and to a water supply. The system is equipped with foam-water spray nozzles for extinguishing agent discharge (foam followed by water or in reverse order) and for distribution over the area to be protected. System operation arrangements parallel those for foam-water sprinkler systems as described in the definition of *Foam-Water Sprinkler System*.

Foam-Water Sprinkler System.* A special system that is pipe-connected to a source of foam concentrate and to a water supply. The system is equipped with appropriate discharge devices for extinguishing agent discharge and for distribution over the area to be protected. The piping system is connected to the water supply through a control valve that usually is actuated by operation of automatic detection equipment that is installed in the same areas as the sprinklers. When this valve opens, water flows into the piping system, foam concentrate is injected into the water, and the resulting foam solution discharging through the discharge devices generates and distributes foam. Upon exhaustion of the foam concentrate supply, water discharge follows and continues until shut off manually. Systems can be used for discharge of water first, followed by discharge of foam for a specified period, and then followed by water until manually shut off. Existing deluge sprinkler systems that have been converted to the use of aqueous film-forming foam or film-forming fluoroprotein foam are classified as foam-water sprinkler systems.

Listed.* Equipment, materials, or services included in a list published by an organization that is acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction and concerned with evaluation of products or services, that maintains periodic inspection of production of listed equipment or materials or periodic evaluation of services, and whose listing states that either the equipment, material, or service meets identified standards or has been tested and found suitable for a specified purpose.

Preprimed System.* A wet pipe system containing foam solution.

Proportioning. The continuous introduction of foam concentrate at the recommended ratio into the water stream to form foam solution.

Rate. The total flow of solution per unit of time, which is expressed in gpm (L/min) in this standard.

Shall. Indicates a mandatory requirement.

Should. Indicates a recommendation or that which is advised but not required.

Standard. A document, the main text of which contains only mandatory provisions using the word "shall" to indicate requirements and which is in a form generally suitable for mandatory reference by another standard or code or for adoption into law. Nonmandatory provisions shall be located in an appendix, footnote, or fine-print note and are not to be considered a part of the requirements of a standard.

1-4 General System Information.

1-4.1 Foam-water deluge and preaction systems shall be provided with automatic and auxiliary manual tripping means.

Exception: Manual operation only shall be permitted for foam-water deluge systems where acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction.

1-4.2 Foam-water systems shall be of the wet pipe, dry pipe, deluge, or preaction type.

1-4.3 Systems shall deliver foam to the hazards they protect for a specified period at given densities, either prior to water discharge or following water discharge, depending upon system design purpose.

1-4.4 Following completion of discharge of foam solution to the hazards protected, foam-water sprinkler and spray systems shall discharge water until manually shut off.

1-4.5* Authorities having jurisdiction shall be consulted as to the means by which a reserve supply of foam concentrate shall be made available. The reserve supply shall be listed for use with system components. (See Section 2-3.)

1-4.6* Wet pipe foam-water systems shall be preprimed with foam-water solution.

Exception: Systems shall not be required to be preprimed where recommended by the foam concentrate manufacturer and where approved by the authority having jurisdiction.

1-5 Applicability.

1-5.1* Foam-water sprinkler and spray systems shall discharge foam solution or water from the same discharge devices. Because of this dual extinguishing agent discharge characteristic, these systems shall be selectively applicable to combination Class A and Class B hazards.

1-5.2 Foam-water deluge systems are applicable to the protection of two-dimensional flammable liquid hazards. They shall be permitted to be used for any of the following purposes or combinations thereof:

(a) *Extinguishment.* The primary purpose of such systems is the extinguishment of fire in the protected hazard. For this purpose, foam-solution discharge densities shall be provided by system design, use of selected discharge devices, and provision of supplies of water at required pressures to accomplish the system design. Foam-discharge rates shall be able to provide required rates of water discharge from the system until shut off during the design period and following depletion of foam concentrate supplies.

(b) *Prevention.* Prevention of fire in the protected hazard is a supplemental feature of such systems. Manual operation of a system to discharge foam or water selectively from the discharge devices in case of accumulations of hazardous materials from spills in such occupancies as garages, aircraft hangars, petrochemical plants, paint and varnish plants, or from other causes in the protected area, will afford protection against ignition, pending clean-up measures. In such cases, manual system operation provides foam coverage in the area with water discharge manually available.

(c) *Control and Exposure Protection.* Control of fire to allow controlled burning of combustible materials where extinguishment is not possible and exposure protection to reduce heat transfer from an exposure fire can be accomplished by water spray or foam, or both, from these special systems. The degree of accomplishment is related strongly to the fixed discharge densities provided by the system design.

1-5.3 Foam of any type is not an effective extinguishing agent on fires involving liquefied or compressed gases (e.g., butane, butadiene, propane), on materials that will react violently with water (e.g., metallic sodium) or that produce hazardous materials by reacting with water, or on fires involving electrical equipment where the electrical nonconductivity of the extinguishing agent is of primary importance.

1-5.4* Only alcohol-type foam shall be used on fires in water-soluble solvents and polar solvents. Manufacturers of foam concentrates that are manufactured for the protection of such hazards shall be consulted for applicability.

1-5.5* Consideration shall be given to potential contamination of water supplies, treating systems, and effluent by foam concentrate, foam, or foam solution runoff. The foam concentrate manufacturer and the appropriate authority having jurisdiction shall be consulted for guidance.

1-6 Approvals.

1-6.1 Prior to designing a system for consideration, the authority having jurisdiction shall be consulted. All plans and specifications for the installation shall be approved by the authority having jurisdiction prior to installation, and such authority shall be consulted as to devices and materials used in system construction and as to selection of the foam concentrate to be provided for system use. All equipment and concentrates shall be approved for the particular application intended.

1-6.2 Retroactivity Clause. The provisions of this document are considered necessary to provide a reasonable level of protection from loss of life and property from fire. They reflect situations and the state of the art at the time the standard was issued.

Unless otherwise noted, it is not intended that the provisions of this document be applied to facilities, equipment, structures, or installations that were existing or approved for construction or installation prior to the effective date of this document.

Exception: In those cases where it is determined by the authority having jurisdiction that the existing situation involves a distinct hazard to life or property, this standard shall apply.

1-7 Units. Metric units of measurement in this standard are in accordance with the modernized metric system known as the International System of Units (SI). The liter and bar units, which are not part of but are recognized by SI, commonly are used in international fire protection. These units are listed in Table 1-7 with conversion factors.

Table 1-7 SI Units and Conversion Factors

Name of Unit	Unit Symbol	Conversion Factor
liter	L	1 gal = 3.785 L
liter per minute per square meter	L/min·m ²	1 gpm/ft ² = 40.746 L/min·m ²
millimeter per minute	mm/min	1 gpm/ft ² = 40.746 mm/min
cubic decimeter	dm ³	1 gal = 3.785 dm ³
pascal	Pa	1 psi = 6894.757 Pa
bar	bar	1 psi = 0.0689 bar
bar	bar	1 bar = 105 Pa

For additional conversions and information, see ASTM SI 10, *Standard for Use of the International System of Units (SI): The Modern Metric System*.

1-7.1 If a value for measurement as given in this standard is followed by an equivalent value in other units, the first stated shall be regarded as the requirement. A given equivalent value shall be considered to be approximate.

1-7.2 SI units have been converted by multiplying the quantity by the conversion factor and then rounding the result to the appropriate number of significant digits.

Chapter 2 System Components

2-1 Approved Devices and Materials. All component parts including foam concentrates shall be listed for the use intended.

Exception: Where listed components are not manufactured, the components shall be of an approved type.

2-2 Discharge Devices.

2-2.1 Discharge devices and foam concentrates shall be listed for use together.

2-2.2 Discharge devices for foam-water deluge and spray shall be permitted to be air-aspirating, such as foam-water sprinkler and foam-water spray nozzles, or they shall be permitted to be non-air-aspirating, such as standard sprinklers.

2-2.3 Discharge devices for foam-water wet pipe, dry pipe, and preaction systems shall be automatic in operation and shall be non-air-aspirating.

2-3 Foam Concentrates.

2-3.1* Foam concentrates shall be listed for use with the foam concentrate proportioning equipment and with the discharge devices with which a given system is equipped. Replacement supplies of foam concentrates shall be listed for use with system components. Different types and brands of foam concentrates that are not compatible shall not be mixed in storage.

2-3.2 The quantities of foam concentrates to be used shall be based on flow rates and duration times for the application time period as specified in Chapter 4.

Exception: The foam concentrate used in a preprimed system shall be in addition to the quantity specified above.

2-3.3* There shall be a reserve supply of foam concentrate to meet the design requirements of the system and to put the system back in service within 24 hours after operation.

2-4 Foam Concentrate Proportioning Means.

2-4.1 Balanced-pressure or positive-pressure injection shall be the preferred methods for introduction of foam concentrates into the water flowing through the supply piping to the system.

2-4.2* Balanced-pressure injection methods shall be one of the following:

(a) A balance-pressure proportioning system utilizing a foam concentrate pump discharging through a metering orifice into a proportioning controller with the foam concentrate and water pressures automatically maintained as equal by the use of a pressure balancing valve.

(b) A balanced-pressure proportioning system utilizing a pressure proportioning tank with a diaphragm or bladder to separate the water and foam concentrate discharging through a metering orifice into a proportioning controller.

(c) An in-line balanced-pressure proportioning system utilizing a foam concentrate pump or bladder tank. A pressure regulating device placed in the pump return line shall maintain constant pressure in the foam concentrate supply line at all design flow rates. This constant pressure shall be greater

than the maximum water pressure under all operating conditions.

(d) Foam concentrate pump discharging through a metering orifice into the protection system riser with the foam pressure at the upstream side of the orifice exceeding the water pressure in the system riser by a specific design value.

2-4.3 Other listed methods for foam proportioning shall be permitted as follows:

(a) Balanced-positive-pressure injection systems utilizing a foam concentrate pump and drive motor that vary the foam concentrate pump output to match water flow rates while maintaining the correct percentage of foam concentrate

(b) Around-the-pump proportioners

(c)* In-line eductors (inductors)

2-4.4* Orifice plates shall have telltale indicators giving orifice diameters and indication of flow direction if flow characteristics vary with flow direction.

2-5* Foam Concentrate Pumps.

2-5.1 Materials.

2-5.1.1* The design and materials of construction for foam concentrate pumps shall be approved for use with the type of foam concentrate used in the system. Special attention shall be paid to the type of seal or packing used.

2-5.1.2 Where foam concentrate pumps utilizing cast-iron or ductile iron components are used, the pumps shall remain flooded with concentrate to minimize corrosion, foaming, or sticking.

2-5.2 Foam concentrate pumps shall have rated capacities at or in excess of the maximum system demand. To ensure positive injection of foam concentrate, the discharge pressure ratings of pumps at the design discharge capacity shall be in excess of the maximum water pressure available under any condition at the point of foam concentrate injection.

2-5.3* Foam concentrate pumps capable of overpressurizing the system shall be provided with means of pressure relief from the discharge to the supply side of the pump to prevent excessive pressure and temperature. Overpressure shall not exceed the working pressure of the foam concentrate piping system.

2-5.4* Foam concentrate pumps shall have means for flushing. They shall be provided with a drain cock or valve.

2-5.5 Foam concentrate pumps shall be automatic-starting upon system actuation.

2-5.6 Provisions shall be made for automatic shutoff of the foam concentrate pump after the foam concentrate supply is exhausted.

2-6 Power Supply and Controller. The power supply and controllers for the drivers of foam concentrate pumps shall be installed in accordance with NFPA 20, *Standard for the Installation of Centrifugal Fire Pumps*, and NFPA 70, *National Electrical Code*®.

2-7 Foam Concentrate Storage Tanks.

2-7.1 Storage tanks for foam concentrates shall be constructed of materials compatible with the liquid, be solidly mounted, and be permanently located.

2-7.2 The storage temperatures for which foam concentrates are listed shall be considered the temperature limits for location of storage tanks.

2-7.3 Atmospheric-Type Storage Tanks.

2-7.3.1 Storage tanks shall have capacities to accommodate the needed quantities of foam concentrate plus space for thermal expansion. Foam concentrate outlets from the tanks shall be located to prevent sediment from being drawn into the system.

2-7.3.2 When determining the quantity of foam concentrates, the volume of the sediment pocket shall be added to the quantity needed for system operation.

2-7.3.3* Tanks shall be equipped with conservation-type vents, access handholes, or manholes that are located to provide for inspection of interior tank surfaces, connections for pump suction, relief, and testing lines, protected sight gauges or other liquid level devices, and filling and draining connections.

2-7.3.4 Tank discharge outlets shall be located to furnish a positive head on the pump suction.

2-7.4* Pressure-Type Storage Tanks. Pressure proportioning tanks shall have means for filling, for gauging the level of foam concentrates, and for drainage, cleaning, and inspection of interior surfaces and of the concentrate holding bladder or diaphragm, if provided. These tanks shall be stamped to be identified as ASME *Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code*, Section VIII, Division 1.

2-8 Piping, Valves, Pipe Fittings, and Hangers.

2-8.1 Piping, valves, pipe fittings, and hangers, including corrosion-protection coatings, shall be in accordance with NFPA 13, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems*.

2-8.2* Piping, fittings, and valves shall be of a material compatible with the foam concentrate, foam solution, or water used, as applicable.

2-8.3* Rubber-gasketed fittings shall be permitted to be used to connect pipe in fire-exposed areas where the foam-water deluge system is automatically controlled. Fire-exposed areas in which these fittings are located shall be protected by automatic foam-water deluge systems or other approved means.

2-9 Location. Equipment items, such as storage tanks and proportioners for foam concentrates; pumps for water and foam concentrates; and control valves for water, foam concentrates, and foam solution, shall be located as near as possible to the hazard or hazards they protect but shall not be exposed to a fire in a manner that is likely to impair system performance.

2-10 Alarms. Alarms shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of NFPA 13, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems*.

2-11 Strainers for Foam Concentrates.

2-11.1* Strainers shall be installed in foam concentrate lines upstream of foam concentrate pumps. Where listed strainers of the proper size are not available, strainers that have a ratio of open-basket area to inlet pipe size of at least 10:1 shall be used.

2-11.2 Strainers shall be capable of removing all solids of a size that would obstruct system components. Perforations shall be no larger than the smallest orifice in the system and no less than $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (3.2 mm). Strainers shall be installed so as to be

accessible for cleaning (flushing) while maintaining system discharge during an emergency.

2-12 Supervision.

2-12.1* Main water, foam concentrate, and foam solution valves shall be supervised by one of the following methods:

- (a) Central station, proprietary, or remote station signaling service
- (b) Local signaling service that will cause the sounding of an audible signal at a constantly attended location
- (c) Valves locked in the open position
- (d) Valves located within fenced enclosures under the control of the owner, sealed in the open position, and inspected weekly as part of an approved procedure

2-12.2 Detection and actuation circuitry shall be supervised through a listed panel in accordance with NFPA 72, *National Fire Alarm Code*®.

2-13* Test Connections. System test connections shall be sized to accommodate both the low flow of the proportioner and the maximum anticipated flow through the proportioner.

Chapter 3 Water Supplies

3-1* Water Quality.

3-1.1 Water supplied to foam-water systems shall be compatible with the foam concentrate to be used.

3-1.2 Water containing solids likely to clog orifices in discharge devices but otherwise acceptable for foam-making shall be permitted to be used after passing through line strainers. Strainers shall be installed so that they are accessible for cleaning or flushing.

3-2 Water Supply Capacity, Pressure, and Duration.

3-2.1 Water supplies for deluge foam-water sprinkler systems and foam-water spray systems shall be automatic. They shall be of a capacity and pressure that are capable of maintaining foam discharge or water discharge, or both, at the design rate for the required period of discharge over the entire area protected by systems expected to operate simultaneously.

3-2.2* Where the water supply is dependent on public water sources, attention shall be given to the pollution hazard introduced by the use of foam concentrate. Any cross connections shall be reviewed by public health agencies concerned.

3-2.3* Water supplies shall be designed to supply the system at the design discharge rate and pressure for at least 60 minutes.

Exception: Water supplies for aircraft hangars shall be in accordance with NFPA 409, Standard on Aircraft Hangars.

3-2.4* When a fire department connection is required, it shall be installed on the supply side of the proportioner.

The following are additional items that shall be reviewed:

- (a) Overpressurizing of system components
- (b) Imbalance of proportioning equipment
- (c) Dilution of proportioned foam solution
- (d) Disturbance of system accessory devices including, but not limited to the following:
 1. Pressure switches
 2. Hydraulic control valves
 3. Main control valve trim

- (e) Pressures and flows exceeding the foam system design capability

3-2.5 A sign that states the following shall be placed at the fire department connection.

FIRE DEPARTMENT CONNECTION

**THIS CONNECTION FEEDS A FOAM-WATER
SPRINKLER SYSTEM.**

**DO NOT PUMP AT PRESSURES EXCEEDING
[INSERT DESIGN PRESSURE] UNTIL FOAM
LIQUID SUPPLY IS EXHAUSTED.**

**IF INCIDENT IS CONTROLLED BY FOAM
BLANKET, DO NOT DESTROY FOAM BLANKET
BY EXCESSIVE APPLICATION OF WATER.**

Chapter 4 System Design and Installation

4-1 General. This chapter contains the minimum design criteria for foam-water sprinkler systems. Where occupancy standards specify more stringent criteria, they shall take precedence. The design and installation of foam-water systems shall be entrusted to experienced and responsible persons.

4-2 Working Plans and Specifications. Working plans shall be in accordance with NFPA 13, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems*. The information in this section shall also apply.

4-2.1 Plans and specifications shall indicate the quantity of foam concentrate to be stored, including the quantity in reserve, the concentration designation, and the minimum anticipated temperature of the concentrate at the point of proportioning.

4-2.2 The specifications shall indicate the specific tests to be conducted.

4-2.3 Complete plans and detailed data describing pumps, drivers, controllers, power supply, fittings, suction and discharge connections, and suction conditions shall be submitted by the engineer or contractor to the authority having jurisdiction for approval before installation.

4-2.4 Charts showing head delivery, efficiency, and brake horsepower curves of pumps shall be furnished by the contractor.

4-2.5 Where draft curtains, detection zones, and drainage area separations impact the performance of the foam-water system, appropriate plans shall be made available.

4-2.6 Plans shall indicate the location and description of hazards to be protected.

4-3 Design Criteria.

4-3.1* Referenced Standards. System designs shall conform to all the applicable requirements of the following standards unless otherwise specified in this standard.

NFPA 11, *Standard for Low-Expansion Foam*

NFPA 13, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems*

NFPA 14, *Standard for the Installation of Standpipe and Hose Systems*

NFPA 15, *Standard for Water Spray Fixed Systems for Fire Protection*

NFPA 20, *Standard for the Installation of Centrifugal Fire Pumps*

NFPA 22, *Standard for Water Tanks for Private Fire Protection*

NFPA 24, *Standard for the Installation of Private Fire Service Mains and Their Appurtenances*

NFPA 30, *Flammable and Combustible Liquids Code*

NFPA 70, *National Electrical Code*

NFPA 72, *National Fire Alarm Code*

4-3.2* Discharge Criteria. The design discharge density shall be in accordance with the applicable occupancy standard for water or foam-water systems but in no case less than 0.16 gpm/ft² (6.5 L/min-m²). Water-soluble and certain flammable and combustible liquids and polar solvents that are destructive to conventional foams necessitate the use of alcohol-resistant foams. In all cases, the manufacturer of the foam concentrate and the foam-making equipment shall be consulted regarding limitations and for recommendations based on listings or specific fire tests.

4-3.3 Discharge Duration.

4-3.3.1 The foam solution shall be designed to discharge for a period of 10 minutes (based on the density as specified in 4-3.2) over the entire system area for deluge and spray foam-water systems and over the design area for wet pipe, dry pipe, and preaction foam-water systems.

4-3.3.2 Where actual system discharge exceeds the minimum as specified in 4-3.2, a proportionate reduction in the duration of the foam discharge time shall be permitted, but in no case shall the duration be less than 7 minutes.

4-3.4 Proportioning System. The proportioning system selected shall be capable of meeting the following conditions:

- Actual calculated system discharge demand at the proper foam percentage for the most hydraulically demanding condition
- Actual calculated system discharge demand at the proper foam percentage for the least hydraulically demanding condition
- Foam liquid pressures at least equal to the highest anticipated water pressure

4-3.5 Foam Concentrate Lines.

4-3.5.1* Where foam concentrate lines to the protective system injection points are run underground or where they run aboveground for more than 50 ft (15 m), these lines shall be maintained full, and a means of checking the tightness of the system shall be provided.

4-3.5.2 The temperature of the foam concentrate lines and components shall be maintained within the storage temperature limits specified for the foam concentrate.

4-3.6 Drainage. Facilities shall be provided for the safe removal or retention of the largest anticipated flammable liquid spill plus the free water reaching the floor from the fixed fire protection system, as well as the discharge from hose streams.

Exception: Where applicable occupancy standards specify containment or drainage that differs from that specified in 4-3.6, the occupancy standard shall apply.

4-3.7 Wet Pipe, Dry Pipe, and Preaction Foam-Water Systems.

4-3.7.1 The total design area shall be 5000 ft² (465 m²).

Exception: Where applicable occupancy standards specify design areas different from that specified in 4-3.7.1, the occupancy standards shall take precedence.

4-3.7.2 Sprinkler spacing shall not exceed 100 ft² (9.3 m²) per sprinkler or exceed 12 ft (3.7 m) spacing between sprinklers on a branch line or between branch lines.

Exception: Where applicable occupancy standards specify a sprinkler spacing different from that specified in 4-3.7.2, the occupancy standards shall take precedence.

4-3.7.3 For foam-water preaction systems the requirements of 4-3.8 shall also apply.

4-3.7.4 The temperature rating of sprinklers shall be within the range of 250°F to 300°F (121°C to 149°C) where they are located at the roof or ceiling. Where sprinklers are located at an intermediate level, the temperature rating shall be within the range of 135°F to 170°F (57°C to 77°C), unless ambient conditions require a higher rating.

4-3.8 Foam-Water Deluge Systems.

4-3.8.1* In automatic systems, the detection equipment shall be connected to a means for tripping water deluge valves and other system-control equipment. Supplemental manual means for this purpose also shall be provided.

4-3.8.2 In automatic systems, foam concentrate injection shall be activated automatically by, or concurrently with, activation of the main water supply control valve. Manual operating means shall be designed for this same purpose.

4-3.8.3 Automatic detection equipment, whether pneumatic, hydraulic, or electric, shall be provided with complete supervision arranged so that failure of equipment, loss of supervising air pressure, or loss of electric energy results in clear notification of the abnormal condition.

4-3.8.4 Where used in a corrosive atmosphere, the detection devices shall be of materials not subject to corrosion or protected to resist corrosion.

4-3.8.5* Automatic detection equipment of the electric type and any auxiliary equipment of the electric type, if in hazardous areas, shall be designed specifically for use in such areas.

4-3.8.6 In automatic systems, manually operated tripping devices shall actuate the automatic control valve by mechanical, pneumatic, electric, or other approved means. The manual device shall be strong enough to prevent breakage. Manual controls shall not necessitate a pull of more than 40 lb [178 N (force)] nor a movement of more than 14 in. (356 mm) to secure operation.

4-4 Hydraulic Calculations.

4-4.1 Foam-Water Deluge Systems.

4-4.1.1 System piping shall be hydraulically designed in order to obtain reasonably uniform foam and water distribution and to allow for loss of head in water supply piping. The adjustment in pipe sizes shall be based on a maximum variation of 20 percent above the specified discharge rate per sprinkler or nozzle.

4-4.1.2 Pipe sizes shall be adjusted according to detailed friction-loss calculations. These calculations shall show the relationship between the water supply and the water demand.

4-4.1.3 Hydraulic calculations for determining the foam solution and water flow characteristics of systems covered by this standard shall be in accordance with NFPA 15, *Standard for*

Water Spray Fixed Systems for Fire Protection. Piping carrying foam solution shall be sized as if carrying plain water.

4-4.1.4* The friction losses in piping carrying foam concentrate shall be calculated using the Darcy formula, also known as the Fanning formula. Friction factors for use with this formula shall be selected from the graphs shown in Figures 4-4.1.4(a) through 4-4.1.4(d). In calculating the Reynolds number for selecting friction factors from the graphs, the actual density (or specific gravity) of the foam concentrate to be employed in the system shall be used. The viscosity used shall be the actual viscosity of the foam concentrate at the lowest anticipated storage temperature.

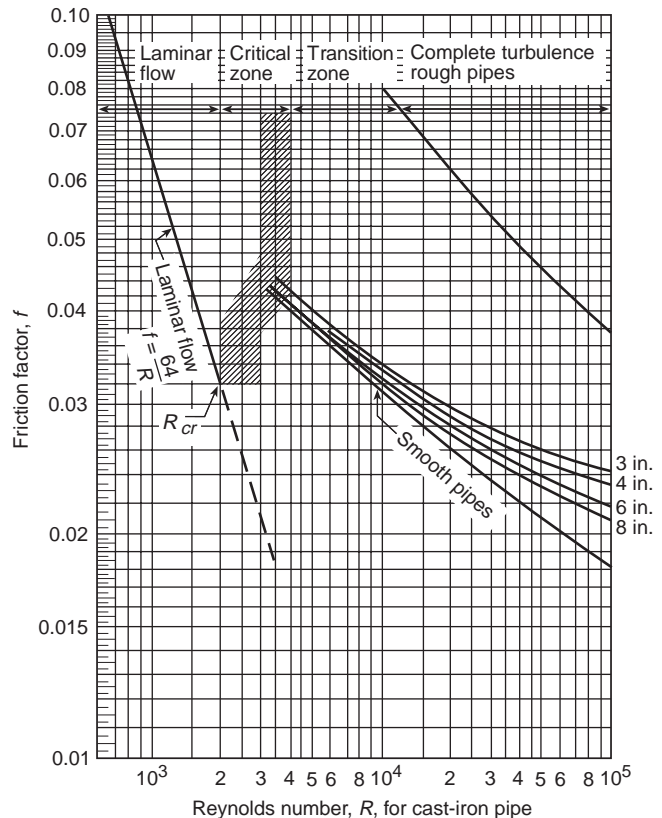


Figure 4-4.1.4(a) Moody diagram. Cast-iron pipe ($R \leq 10^5$).

4-4.1.5 For purposes of computing friction loss in piping, the C -values shall be used for the Hazen-Williams formula in accordance with Table 4-4.1.5.

4-4.2 Foam-Water Wet Pipe, Dry Pipe, and Preaction Systems.

4-4.2.1 System piping shall be hydraulically designed to obtain reasonably uniform foam and water distribution and to allow for loss of head in system piping.

4-4.2.2* Two sets of hydraulic calculations shall be provided:

- Actual calculated demand flow and pressure based on the most hydraulically demanding condition, balanced to the available water supply
- Actual calculated demand flow and pressure based on the least hydraulically demanding design area, balanced to the available water supply

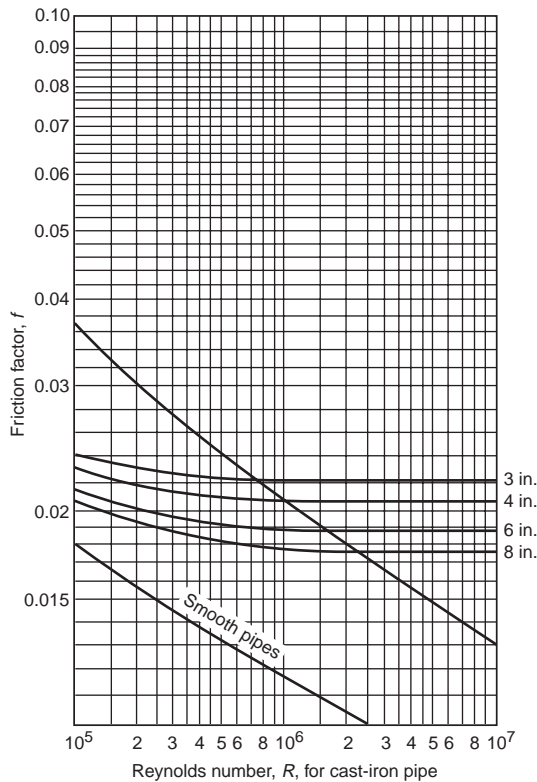


Figure 44.1.4(b) Moody diagram. Cast-iron pipe ($R \geq 10^5$).

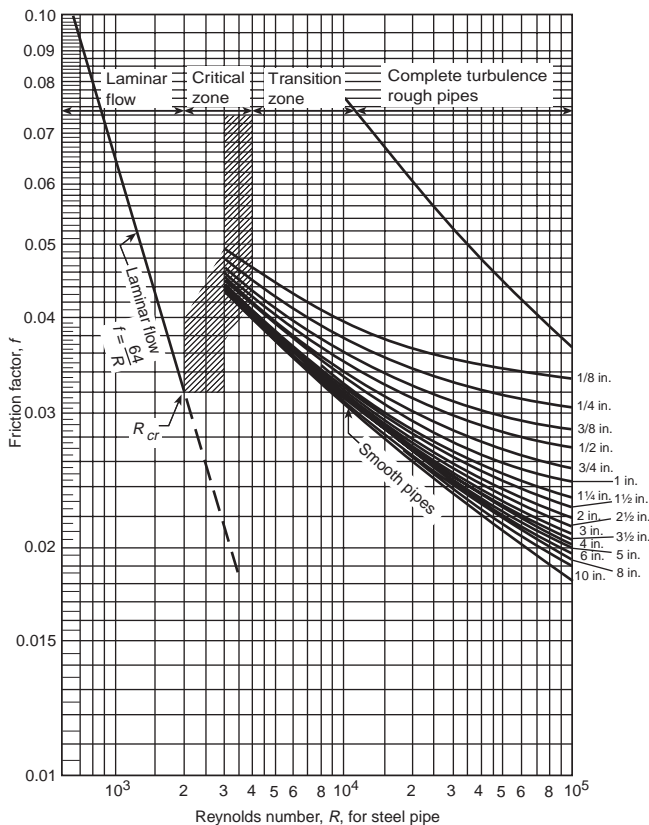


Figure 44.1.4(c) Moody diagram. Steel pipe ($R \leq 10^5$).

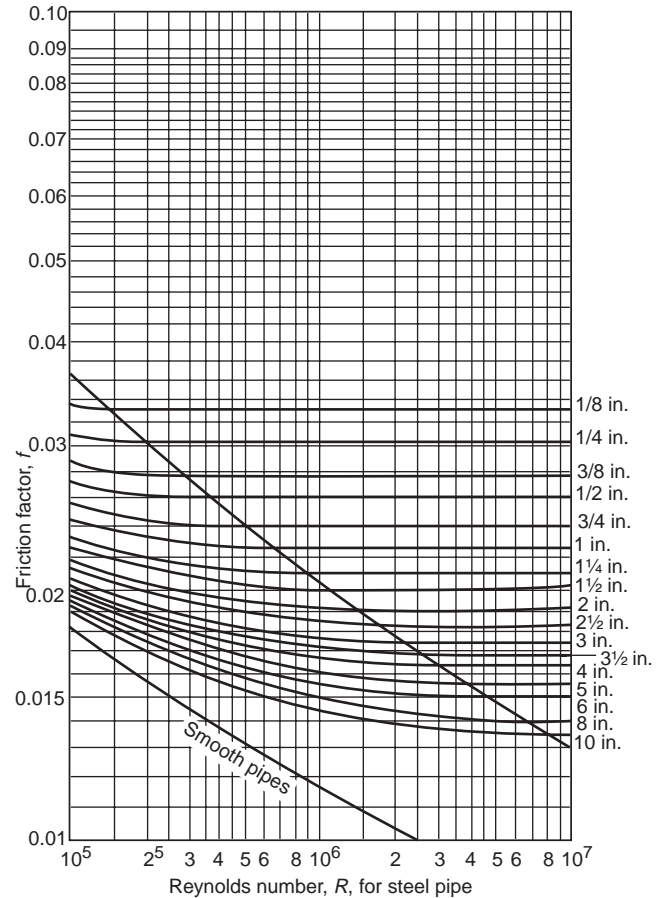


Figure 44.1.4(d) Moody diagram. Steel pipe ($R \geq 10^5$).

Table 44.1.5 Hazen-Williams C-Values

Pipe or Tube	C-Value
Unlined cast or ductile iron	100
Black or carbon steel	100
Galvanized (all)	120
Cement-lined cast or ductile iron	140
Plastic, listed (all)	150
Copper tube or stainless steel	150

44.2.3* Hydraulic balance to, and comparison with, the available water supply shall verify that the actual system discharge will not exceed the capability of the foam concentrate supply to provide foam solution discharge as specified in 4-3.3.1 and 4-3.3.2.

44.2.4 Pipe sizes shall be adjusted according to detailed friction-loss calculations. These calculations shall show the relationship between the water supply and system demand.

44.2.5 Hydraulic calculations for determining the foam solution and water flow characteristics of systems covered by this standard shall be in accordance with NFPA 13, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems*. Friction-loss characteristics for

foam solution piping shall be considered the same as if the piping were carrying water.

4-4.2.6 For purposes of computing friction loss in piping, the *C*-values in Table 4-4.1.5 shall be used in the Hazen-Williams formula.

4-4.3 The friction losses in piping carrying foam concentrate shall be calculated in accordance with the requirements of 4-4.1.4.

Chapter 5 Acceptance Tests

5-1* Flushing of Supply Piping. Underground mains and lead-in connections shall be thoroughly flushed before connection is made to the system piping. Flushing shall be in accordance with NFPA 24, *Standard for the Installation of Private Fire Service Mains and Their Appurtenances*.

5-2 Hydrostatic Pressure Tests.

5-2.1* All piping, including foam concentrate lines and the system piping, shall be hydrostatically tested at 200 psi (13.8 bar) or at 50 psi (3.4 bar) in excess of the maximum static pressure where the maximum static pressure exceeds 150 psi (10.3 bar). The pressure shall be maintained without loss for 2 hours.

Exception: Bladder tanks shall not be included in pressure tests.

5-2.2* The amount of leakage in underground water piping shall be measured at the specific test pressure by pumping from a calibrated container. Leakage shall not exceed 2 qt/hr (1.89 L/hr) per 100 joints irrespective of pipe diameter.

5-3 System Tests Discharging Foam From Foam-Water Deluge and Spray Systems.

5-3.1* Acceptance tests shall be conducted to ensure that the hazard is fully protected in accordance with Chapter 4, and to determine the flow pressures, actual discharge capacity, consumption rate of foam-producing materials, staffing needs, and other operating characteristics. The tests shall include the following:

- (a) Foam discharge from a single system
- (b) Simultaneous foam discharge of the maximum number systems expected to operate on a single hazard

5-3.2 The discharge shall be continued for the time required to obtain stabilized discharge.

5-4* Proportioning System Testing.

5-4.1 Operation of the proportioning equipment shall be verified by flow tests. The percentage of foam concentrate in solution shall be determined. During the tests, the pressure at the discharge devices shall be at least equal to the minimum design operating pressure of the system or systems tested.

Percentage of all foam concentrates injected into the water shall be within the following limits. The foam concentrate induction rate of a proportioner, expressed as a percentage of the foam solution flow (water plus foam concentrate) shall be minus 0 percent to plus 30 percent of the manufacturer's listed induction rate or 1 percentage point, whichever is less.

Exception: Where full-flow operational tests are not practical, tests shall be permitted to be conducted through the test connections required in Section 2-13.

5-4.1.1 Flow tests for wet pipe, dry pipe, and preaction systems shall be conducted at both the high and low ends of the expected design rate and shall meet the criteria of 5-4.1.

5-4.2* The rate of foam solution discharge shall be computed from hydraulic calculations utilizing recorded inlet or end-of-system operating pressure, or both. The foam concentration shall be calculated by timing a given displacement from the storage tank, a refractometric means, or a conductivity method.

5-4.3* After operation with foam, foam-water deluge and spray systems shall be flushed with water to remove foam residue.

Exception: Those portions of the system normally containing foam concentrate when the system is in service.

5-5 Instructions. The installing contractors shall provide the owner with the following:

- (a) All literature and instructions provided by the manufacturer describing proper operation and maintenance of any equipment and devices installed
- (b) Piping layout drawings, electrical schematics, and hydraulic calculations
- (c) A copy of NFPA 25, *Standard for the Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems*

Chapter 6 Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance

6-1* Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Foam-Water Sprinkler Systems. Systems shall be so arranged that tests and inspections can be made without discharging foam solution to the system piping in order to check operation of all mechanical and electrical components of the system. The system shall be arranged so that tests are performed with as little loss of foam concentrate as possible.

6-2 Testing and Inspection of Alarm and Detection Devices.

Alarm and detection devices shall be tested and inspected in accordance with NFPA 72, *National Fire Alarm Code*.

6-3* Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance Frequency.

Foam-water sprinkler systems shall be tested and inspected in accordance with NFPA 25, *Standard for the Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems*, Chapter 8.

Chapter 7 Referenced Publications

7-1 The following documents or portions thereof are referenced within this standard as mandatory requirements and shall be considered part of the requirements of this standard. The edition indicated for each referenced mandatory document is the current edition as of the date of the NFPA issuance of this standard. Some of these mandatory documents might also be referenced in this standard for specific informational purposes and, therefore, are also listed in Appendix B.

7-1.1 NFPA Publications. National Fire Protection Association, 1 Batterymarch Park, P.O. Box 9101, Quincy, MA 02269-9101.

NFPA 11, *Standard for Low-Expansion Foam*, 1998 edition.

NFPA 11A, *Standard for Medium- and High-Expansion Foam Systems*, 1999 edition.

NFPA 13, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems*, 1996 edition.

NFPA 14, *Standard for the Installation of Standpipe and Hose Systems*, 1996 edition.

NFPA 15, *Standard for Water Spray Fixed Systems for Fire Protection*, 1996 edition.

NFPA 20, *Standard for the Installation of Centrifugal Fire Pumps*, 1996 edition.

NFPA 22, *Standard for Water Tanks for Private Fire Protection*, 1998 edition.

NFPA 24, *Standard for the Installation of Private Fire Service Mains and Their Appurtenances*, 1995 edition.

NFPA 25, *Standard for the Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems*, 1998 edition.

NFPA 30, *Flammable and Combustible Liquids Code*, 1996 edition.

NFPA 70, *National Electrical Code*®, 1999 edition.

NFPA 72, *National Fire Alarm Code*®, 1996 edition.

NFPA 409, *Standard on Aircraft Hangars*, 1995 edition.

7-1.2 ASME Publication. American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 345 East 47th Street, New York, NY 10017.

ASME *Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code*, Section VIII, Division 1, Rules for Construction of Pressure Vessels, 1998.

Appendix A Explanatory Material

Appendix A is not a part of the requirements of this NFPA document but is included for informational purposes only. This appendix contains explanatory material, numbered to correspond with the applicable text paragraphs.

A-1-1.2 For medium- and high-expansion foam, see NFPA 11A, *Standard for Medium- and High-Expansion Foam Systems*.

A-1-2 The uses of foam (or mechanical foam, as it was first called) for fire protection have increased greatly since it was first used in the 1930s. Original applications of this agent utilized a proteinaceous-type liquid foam-forming concentrate delivered in water solution to a turbulence-producing foam generator or nozzle that then directed the mechanically formed foam to a burning fuel tank or area of burning flammable fuel. (Details of these and similar applications are found in NFPA 11, *Standard for Low-Expansion Foam*, NFPA 402, *Guide for Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting Operations*, and NFPA 403, *Standard for Aircraft Rescue and Fire-Fighting Services at Airports*.) As the technology for using this agent developed over the years, new systems and new devices for applying the foam to the hazard being protected and new foam-forming liquid concentrates were proven useful for fire protection purposes. The application of foam from overhead sprinkler-type systems using specially designed foam-making nozzles capable of either forming a foam from protein-type foam concentrate solutions or delivering a satisfactory water discharge pattern where supplied with water only, was an early development (circa 1954) in foam fire protection. Protein, fluoroprotein, and aqueous film-forming concentrates or film-forming fluoroprotein foam concentrates (as defined in NFPA 11, *Standard for Low-Expansion Foam*) are suitable for use with foam-water sprinklers. This latter type of foam concentrate also has been found to be suitable for use with standard sprinklers of the type referred to in NFPA 13, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems*, where the system is provided with the necessary foam concentrate proportioning equipment. Care should be

exercised to ensure that the choice of concentrate and discharge device are listed for use together.

This standard is based on available test data and design experience concerning the design information, installation recommendations, operating methods, and maintenance needs for the types of foam-water sprinkler systems previously described and foam-water spray systems utilizing protein, fluoroprotein, or aqueous film-forming foam or film-forming fluoroprotein foam concentrates. These systems possess the common ability to either discharge foam in a spray form or discharge water in a satisfactory pattern for fire protection purposes.

A-1-3 Approved. The National Fire Protection Association does not approve, inspect, or certify any installations, procedures, equipment, or materials; nor does it approve or evaluate testing laboratories. In determining the acceptability of installations, procedures, equipment, or materials, the authority having jurisdiction may base acceptance on compliance with NFPA or other appropriate standards. In the absence of such standards, said authority may require evidence of proper installation, procedure, or use. The authority having jurisdiction may also refer to the listings or labeling practices of an organization that is concerned with product evaluations and is thus in a position to determine compliance with appropriate standards for the current production of listed items.

A-1-3 Authority Having Jurisdiction. The phrase “authority having jurisdiction” is used in NFPA documents in a broad manner, since jurisdictions and approval agencies vary, as do their responsibilities. Where public safety is primary, the authority having jurisdiction may be a federal, state, local, or other regional department or individual such as a fire chief; fire marshal; chief of a fire prevention bureau, labor department, or health department; building official; electrical inspector; or others having statutory authority. For insurance purposes, an insurance inspection department, rating bureau, or other insurance company representative may be the authority having jurisdiction. In many circumstances, the property owner or his or her designated agent assumes the role of the authority having jurisdiction; at government installations, the commanding officer or departmental official may be the authority having jurisdiction.

A-1-3 Discharge Devices. There are three principal types of discharge devices that are installed at the discharge outlets of the systems covered by this standard. Care should be exercised to ensure that the choice of foam concentrate and discharge device are listed for use together.

(a) *Foam-Water Sprinklers.* These discharge devices are specially designed, open-type, air-aspirating sprinklers consisting of an open barrel body foam maker that terminates in a deflector to shape the pattern of the foam or water issuing from the assembly. These devices produce water discharge patterns comparable to those of standard sprinklers. (See NFPA 13, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems*, where discharging at the same rates of flow.)

(b) *Spray Nozzles.* These discharge devices are open, directional spray nozzles. Where supplied with an approved foam solution such as aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF), they discharge foam in a pattern peculiar to the discharge device. (See NFPA 11, *Standard for Low-Expansion Foam*, for specifics on application rates.)

(c) *Standard Sprinklers.* These discharge devices are the standard sprinklers, without heat-responsive elements, referred to in NFPA 13, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler*

Systems, and they are non-air-aspirating. Where they are supplied with AFFF, air foam solution, or film-forming fluoroprotein (FFFP) air foam solution, a foam discharge pattern is produced closely conforming to the water discharge pattern of these sprinklers.

A-1-3 Foam. This standard deals with low-expansion foam. For medium- and high-expansion foam, see NFPA 11A *Standard for Medium- and High-Expansion Foam Systems*.

A-1-3 Foam-Water Deluge System. Foam-water sprinklers are open-type sprinklers designed to do the following:

- Receive foam solution (water plus liquid concentrate)
- Direct the solution through an integral foam maker, the nozzle action of which breaks the solution into spray and discharges it into a mixing tube where it combines with air drawn in through openings in the housing
- Provide mixing chamber capacity for development of the air foam
- Direct the formed foam discharging from the open end of the mixing tube against a deflector, shaped to distribute the foam in a pattern essentially comparable to the water distribution pattern of present-day standard sprinklers (nomenclature from current edition of NFPA 13, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems*), and to do so with essentially no impingement of the foam on the ceiling
- Develop a water distribution pattern directly comparable to that of standard sprinklers, in the case of discharge of water only (i.e., in the absence of foam)

The normal direction of discharge from foam-water sprinklers is downward. To provide a choice in installation design, foam-water sprinklers are produced for installation in the upright position and in the pendent position with the pattern of discharge in either case in the downward direction. Sprinkler deflectors are formed to produce the required discharge pattern, which could mean differing shapes of deflectors for each of the two positions of installation. The variation in the shape of deflectors is illustrated in Figure A-1-3(a).

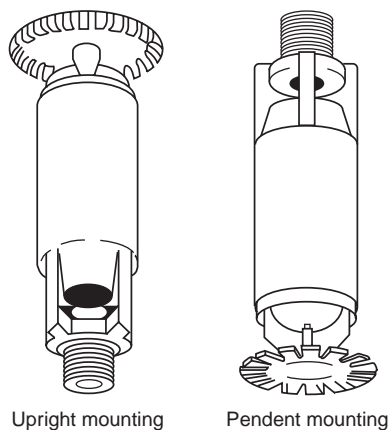


Figure A-1-3(a) Variations in deflector shape.

A-1-3 Foam-Water Dry Pipe System. Dry pipe systems are inherently slower in operation and have a tendency to develop internal scale. Since the foam solution would be proportioned into the system upon operation, the first discharge would be an effective foam. However, due to the slower operation, this

should be considered the least desirable type of sprinkler system for closed-head foam-water sprinkler application.

A-1-3 Foam-Water Preaction System. These systems combine the features of both wet pipe and dry pipe systems. The piping is empty and might, or might not, contain air under low pressure for supervision of the piping. There is a separate detection system that operates the water control valve to release foam solution into the piping. (The actuating means of the valve is described in NFPA 13, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems*.) This detection system should be more sensitive than the sprinkler elements.

With this arrangement, foam solution is usually released into the piping before the sprinklers operate so that, when they do, there is an immediate discharge, as with a wet pipe system. To ensure this discharge, supervision of the actuation system is recommended.

Foam solution would be proportioned into the system upon operation, so there is no need for prepriming. Overall response time generally approaches that of a wet pipe system. Actual time of foam discharge would depend on the type of separate detection system used and the type of fire. With a very rapidly developing fire, the sprinklers might begin to operate very close to the initial operation of the separate detection system, and the piping might not have time to fill with foam solution to achieve immediate discharge. With a slowly developing fire, there would be sufficient time to fill the piping, and there would be a discharge of fresh foam upon sprinkler operation.

These systems are more complex than dry pipe and wet pipe systems, and this factor should be considered.

A-1-3 Foam-Water Spray System. Foam-water spray nozzles combine a foam maker with a body and a distributing deflector. They generate foam in the same manner described for foam-water sprinklers, where supplied with foam solution under pressure, and distribute the resulting foam, or water in the absence of foam solution, in a special pattern peculiar to the particular head.

Foam-water spray nozzles are available in a number of patterns with variations in discharge capacity. See Figure A-1-3(a) and Figure A-1-3(b).



Figure A-1-3(b) Foam-water spray nozzle.

A-1-3 Foam-Water Sprinkler System. These systems can be preprimed with foam solution. This solution would remain in the piping until the system is called upon to operate.

Preprimed systems could require draining, flushing, and repriming on a periodic basis (*see Section 6-3*). This procedure will require an investment in both time and material and should be programmed into the total system operating cost.

A-1-3 Listed. The means for identifying listed equipment may vary for each organization concerned with product evaluation; some organizations do not recognize equipment as listed unless it is also labeled. The authority having jurisdiction should utilize the system employed by the listing organization to identify a listed product.

A-1-3 Preprimed System. These systems have the piping normally filled with foam solution so that there is an immediate discharge of solution when the sprinkler operates. They are the fastest, simplest, and most reliable of all types of sprinkler systems. Foam concentrates in solution will form sediment or can deteriorate where stored in system piping. Contact the manufacturer for guidance.

A-1-4.5 The purpose of a reserve supply of concentrate is to have the means available for returning systems to service-ready condition following system operation.

A-1-4.6 Most test work conducted with closed-head sprinklers has been performed with preprimed systems or systems where foam solution is discharged very quickly — that is, less than 1 minute. The inherent design philosophy is that foam solution is discharged rapidly on the fuel hazard. Where only water is in the sprinkler piping, the designer and the authority having jurisdiction should satisfy themselves that the foam solution delay time is acceptable for the given hazard. Factors to consider include the combustible/flammable liquid fuel hazard, associated ordinary combustibles, probable fire growth rate, number of sprinklers expected to operate, and the involvement of commodities at the time of foam discharge. Fire growth factors include flash point of the fuel, water miscibility, container package, and storage height.

Foam concentrate manufacturers generally do not recommend prepriming with foam solution where alcohol-type concentrates are used. The foam concentrate manufacturers should be consulted. The factors cited above should then be considered if the system is not preprimed with foam solution. (*See A-1-3, Foam-Water Sprinkler System, for draining and flushing guidance.*)

A-1-5.1 Caution should be exercised when auxiliary extinguishing equipment is used with these systems. Some extinguishing agents are incompatible with some foams. The manufacturers should be consulted.

Most foams are not considered suitable extinguishing agents on fires involving liquefied or compressed gases, (e.g., butane, butadiene, propane, etc.); nor on materials that will react violently with water (e.g., metallic sodium) or that will produce hazardous materials by reacting with water; nor on fires involving electrical equipment where the electrical non-conductivity of the extinguishing agent is of first importance.

A-1-5.4 Several AFFF and FFFP concentrates have been listed with standard sprinklers for use on nonmiscible hydrocarbons such as heptane, gasoline, fuel oil, crude oils,

and so forth, and therefore can be permitted to be used on these products. Polar solvents in depth, such as acetone, methyl ethyl ketone, methyl isobutyl ketone, methanol, ethanol, and isopropanol, have been successfully extinguished with special alcohol-type foam concentrates and standard sprinklers. In all cases, the agent to be used should be determined to be effective on the particular hazardous product by means of listing tests or special testing by the manufacturer where necessary. Application rates can be higher than the required 0.16 gpm/ft² (6.5 L/min·m²) for some specific polar solvents.

A-1-5.5 See Appendix E of NFPA 11, *Standard for Low-Expansion Foam*.

A-2-3.1 Foam concentrates meeting the requirements of 2-3.1 are available in 3 percent and 6 percent concentrations. Some foam concentrates are available for use at temperatures as low as -20°F (-28°C).

A-2-3.3 Authorities having jurisdiction should be consulted as to the type of a reserve supply of foam concentrate. The purpose of a reserve supply of foam concentrate is to have available the means for returning systems to service-ready condition following system operation. This supply might be permitted to be in separate tanks or compartments, in drums or cans on the premises, or it might be permitted to be available from an outside source within 24 hours.

A-2-4.2 Figures A-2-4.2(a) through A-2-4.2(h) are schematic arrangements of equipment illustrating the principle of operation of various proportioning methods. Other arrangements or components also can be used to accomplish the same purpose.

The proportioning device selected should be capable of providing a nominal concentration of foam concentrate over the range of flows and pressures for the hazard being protected. Balanced-pressure proportioning systems utilizing foam concentrate pumps will tend to proportion at a higher percentage than anticipated when operating at low flow rates. However, diaphragm or bladder tank-type systems will proportion at a significantly reduced percentage at low flow rates and, therefore, should not be used below their minimum design flow range. (*See Section 5-3.*)

The foam liquid-concentrate metering orifice can be calculated by using the following formula:

$$Q_f = KCd^2\sqrt{\Delta P}$$

where:

K = constant of particular foam liquid concentrate (available from the manufacturer)

C = orifice constant

d = diameter of orifice (in.)

ΔP = pressure differential across the orifice plate

Q_f = volume of foam liquid concentrate (gpm)

The coefficient C is affected by several factors that include orifice shape, viscosity of foam liquid, velocity, and ratio of orifice diameter to pipe diameter.

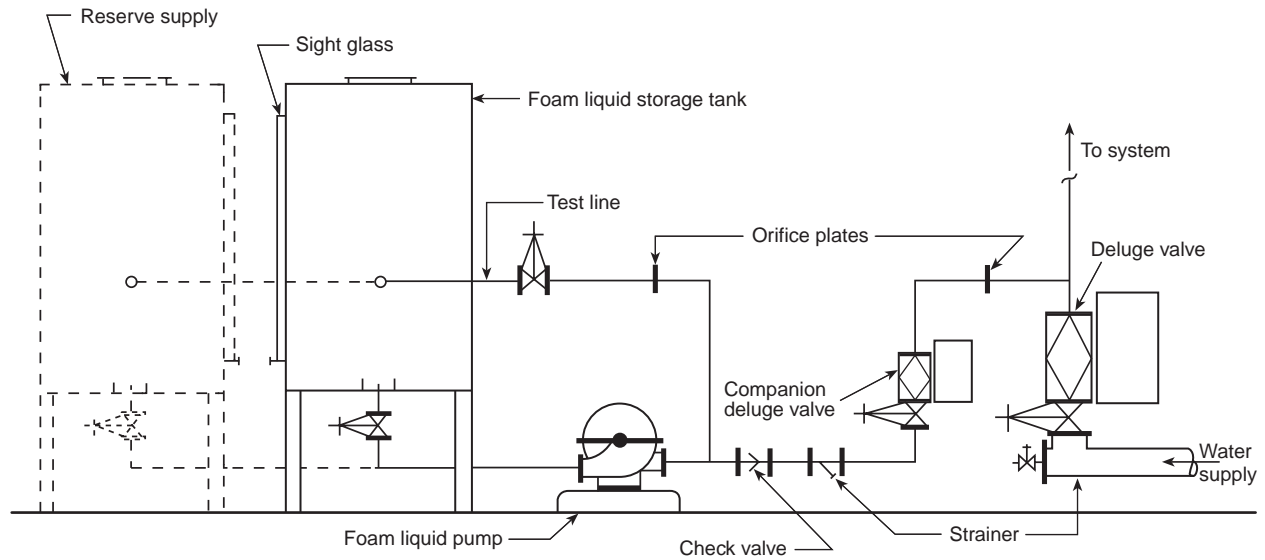


Figure A-2-4.2(a) Schematic arrangement of foam liquid-concentrate storage tank, liquid-concentrate pump, metering proportioners, and interconnecting piping.

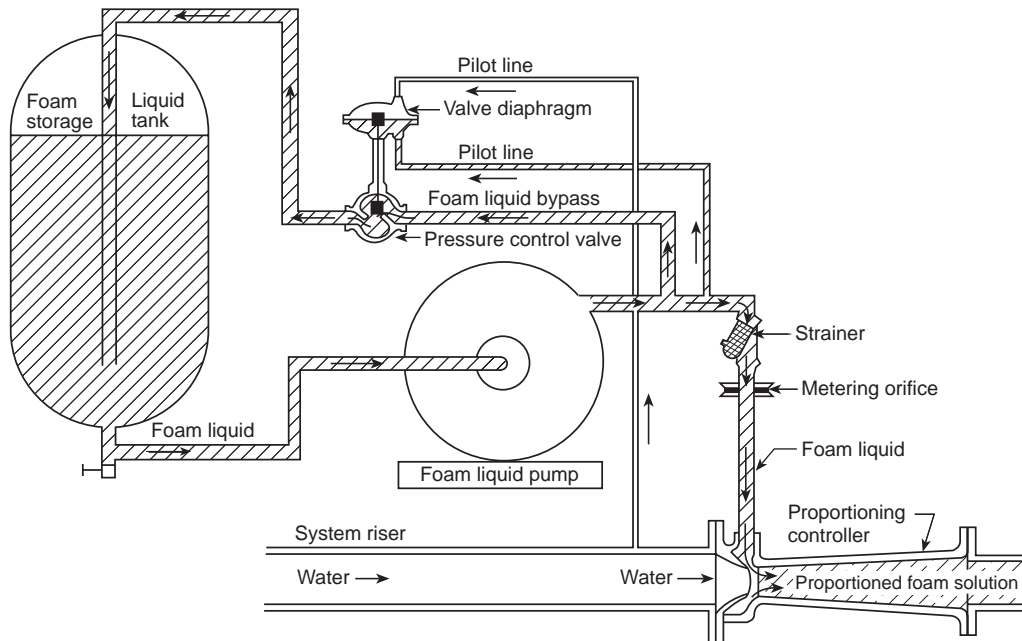


Figure A-2-4.2(b) Balanced-pressure proportioning system.

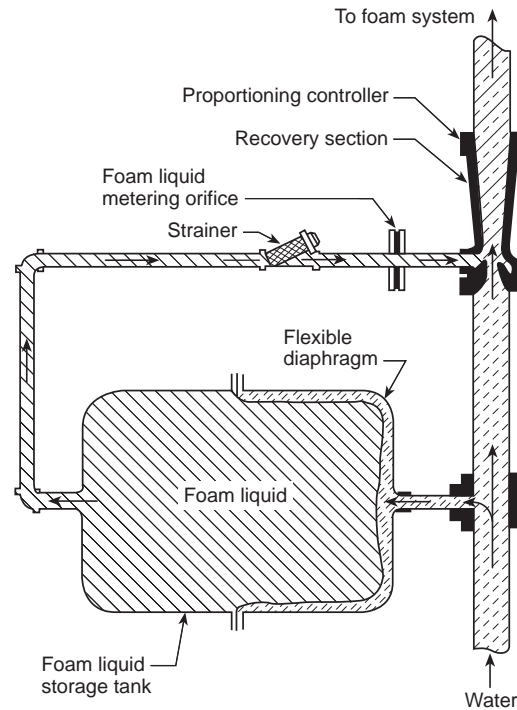


Figure A-2.4.2(c) Pressure proportioning tank with diaphragm.

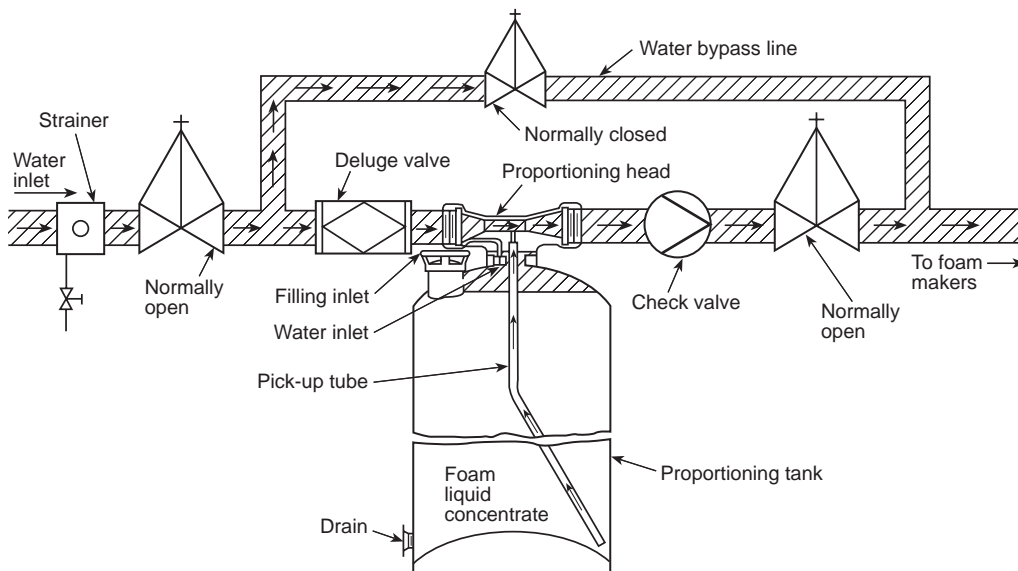


Figure A-2.4.2(d) Pressure proportioning tank method (pressure proportioning tank with diaphragm).
The arrangement of these devices can take a variety of forms. A single tank or a battery of tanks manifolded together can be used.

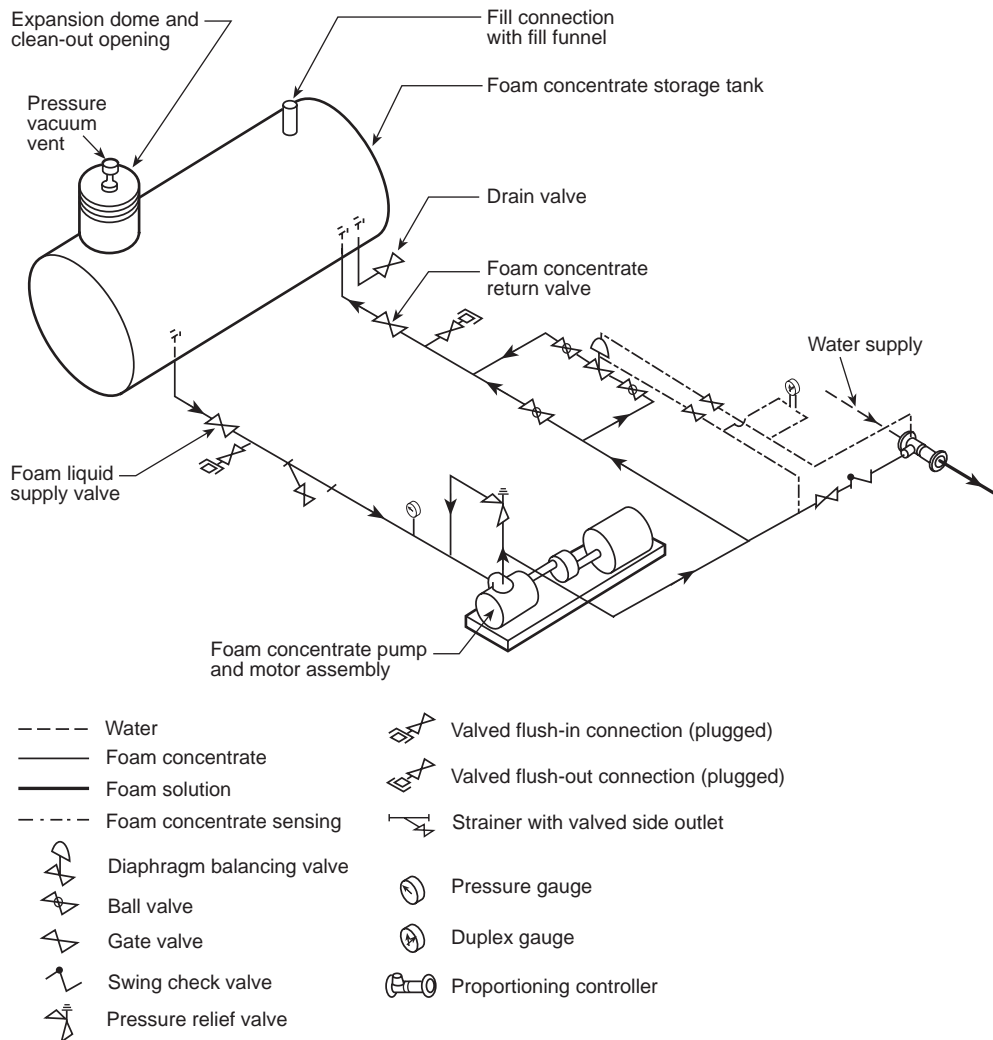


Figure A-2-4.2(e) Balanced-pressure proportioners (with concentrate pump).

A-2-4.3(c) In-line eductors (inductors) should only be used for open-head or deluge systems.

A-2-4.4 See A-2-4.2 for formula for calculation of size of orifices used in metering foam concentrates.

A-2-5 Foam concentrate pumps should have reliability equivalent to that of approved fire pumps. Foam concentrate pumps are generally of the positive displacement variety. Centrifugal pumps might not be suitable for use with foams exhibiting high viscosity characteristics. The foam equipment manufacturer should be consulted for guidance.

A-2-5.1.1 Foam concentrate pumps are generally of the positive displacement variety. Centrifugal pumps might not be suitable for use with foam concentrates exhibiting high viscosity characteristics. The foam equipment manufacturer should be consulted for guidance.

A-2-5.3 Any type of pump (such as a centrifugal or positive displacement pump) capable of overpressurizing the system should be provided with an adequate means of pressure relief.

A-2-5.4 Flushing of the foam concentrate pump might be necessary at periodic intervals or following complete discharge of concentrate.

A-2-7.3.3 Where sight glasses are used to gauge the foam concentrate level, they can indicate false levels if the more viscous foam concentrates are used.

A-2-7.4 Where sight glasses are used to gauge the foam concentrate level, they can indicate false levels if the more viscous foam concentrates are used.

A-2-8.2 Foam solutions react with steel pipe in such a way that, over a period of time, the foam solutions lose their capability to produce a fire-resistant foam. Therefore, in a wet pipe system, there could be a delay in the discharge of effective foam until all the preprimed solution has been flushed out and fresh foam solution reaches the opened sprinklers, unless corrective steps are taken.

A-2-8.3 Rubber-gasketed fittings subject to direct fire exposure are generally not suitable. Where necessary for piping flexibility or for locations subject to earthquake, explosion, or similar hazards, such installations can be permitted. In such cases, special hanging or bracing might be necessary.

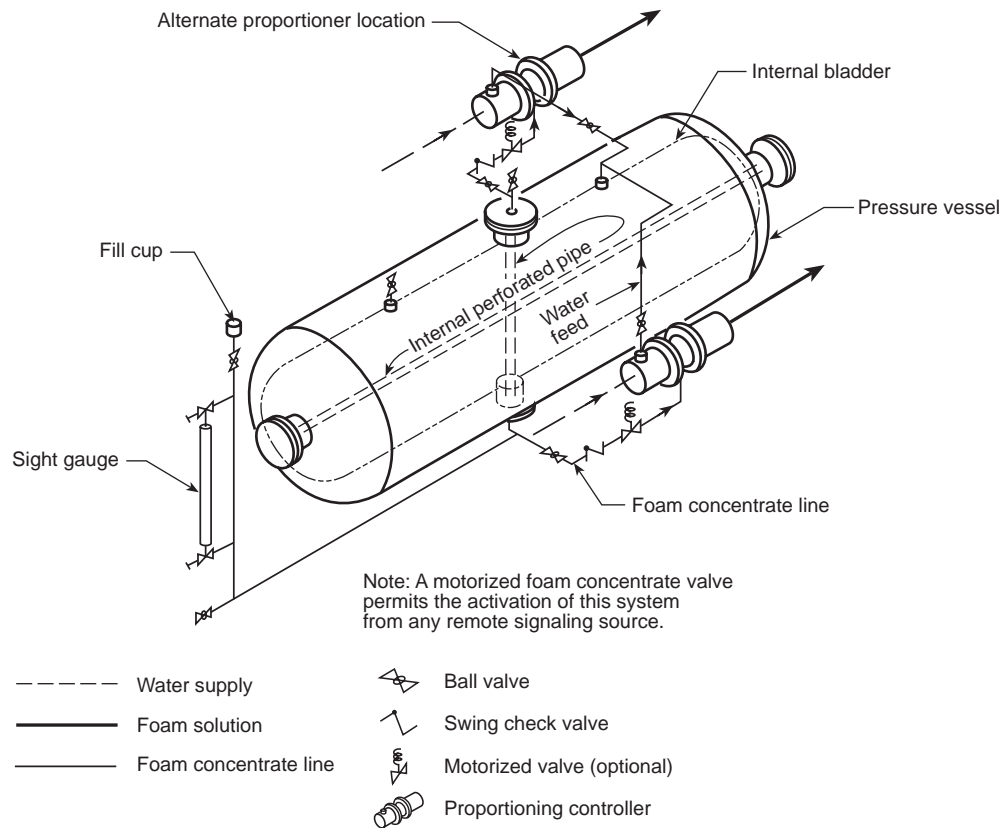


Figure A-2-4.2(f) Balanced-pressure proportioning (bladder system).

A-2-11.1 In bladder tank systems, the pressure drop created by the strainer can upset the foam and water pressure balance and can cause lean proportioning. Therefore, foam concentrate strainers are not recommended in bladder tank systems.

A-2-12.1 Many valves in the foam proportioning system, if left in an incorrect position, can compromise or even disable the foam proportioning system. Examples of valves critical to proper operation of the foam proportioning system that are intended to be supervised include, but are not limited to, valves in the supply from the foam concentrate storage tank, valves in the return to storage tank, storage tank drain valves, strainer blow-off valves, foam concentrate pump supply and discharge valves, bypass valves around diaphragm valves or pressure regulating valves, and valves at the inlet to the proportioner.

A-2-13 In order to provide a means of periodically checking the performance of the proportioners used in foam sprinkler systems, a test connection should be provided. Typical test connections are illustrated in Figure A-2-13. Two options are possible in locating the proportioning controller in the sprinkler riser: before the main sprinkler valve or after the main sprinkler valve. If the proportioning controller is located after the main sprinkler valve, an additional supervised OS&Y valve is needed in order to isolate the sprinkler overhead during the proportioner test. The test connection should be routed to a drain area for easy disposal of the solution produced during the test. (See Figure A-2-13.)

A-3-1 The fire-fighting efficiency of foams is not significantly affected by water temperatures between 35°F and 100°F (2°C and

38°C), although some reduction in expansion occurs with very cold water. If the temperature exceeds 100°F (38°C), however, foam stability and fire-fighting efficiency usually is reduced.

A-3-2.2 It should be ascertained if the installation of a listed back-flow prevention assembly is required.

A-3-2.3 Local regulations might require a means for removal or retention of the largest flammable liquid spill plus the actual calculated flow from the maximum number of systems expected to operate for their calculated duration plus hose streams.

A-3-2.4 Wherever practicable the fire department connection to the foam-water sprinkler system should be separate from the normal building fire sprinkler system. Signs and placards could be appropriate to alert the fire department.

A-4-3.1 For supervision of valves, refer to NFPA 24, *Standard for the Installation of Private Fire Service Mains and Their Appurtenances*.

See NFPA occupancy standards, where applicable.

A-4-3.2 For protection of some flammable liquids, foam manufacturers might recommend application densities considerably higher than the minimum densities specified herein or by occupancy standards. These higher application densities are generally a result of specific fire tests performed on a particular fuel and should be considered in a system design.

Individual hazards might require minimum discharge pressures to adequately compensate for environmental effects such as wind. See NFPA 15, *Standard for Water Spray Fixed Systems for Fire Protection*, for additional information.

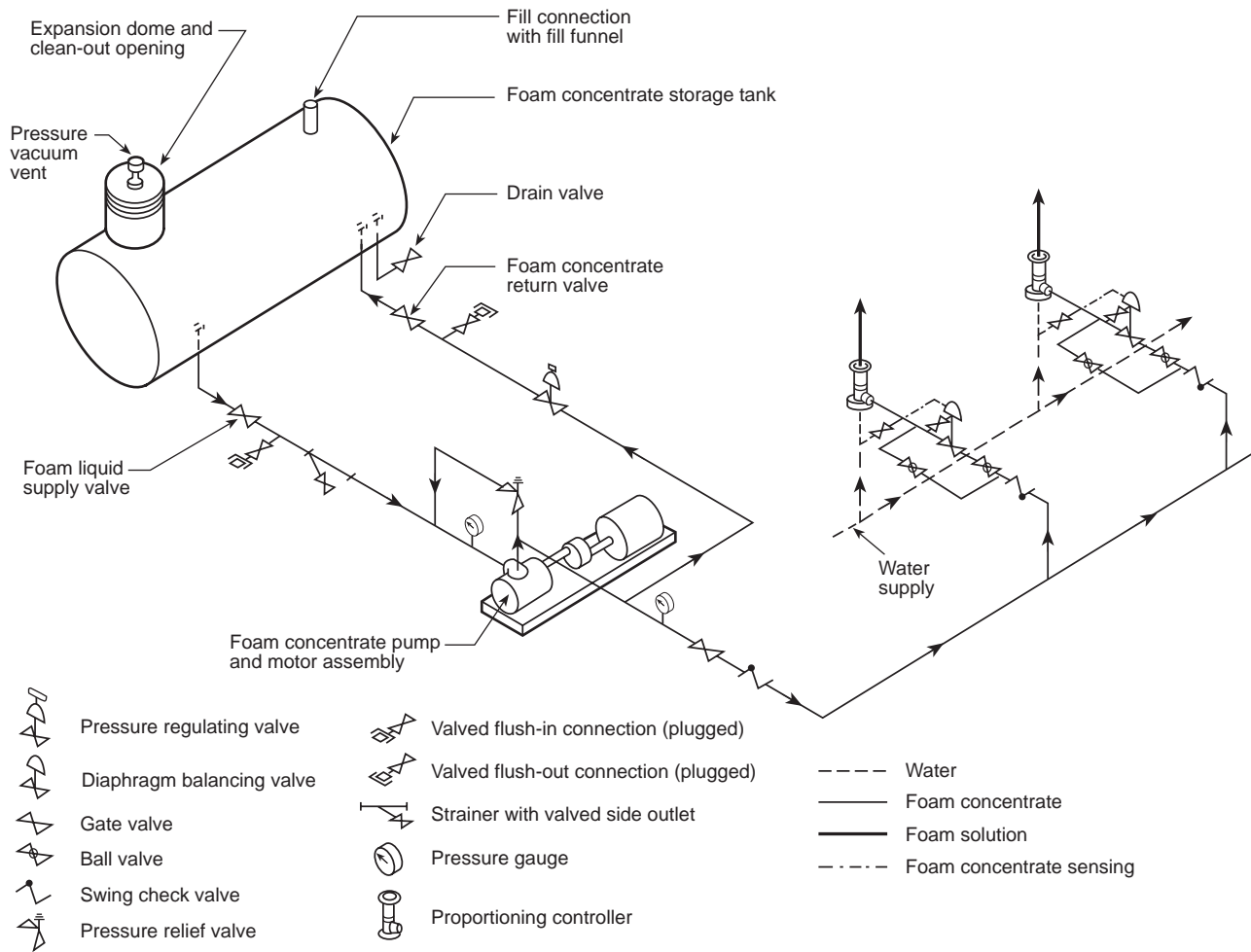


Figure A-2.4.2(g) In-line balanced-pressure proportioning system.

A-4.3.5.1 Where piping integrity is checked by pressurization from a jockey pump or other suitable means, care should be taken to prevent overpressurization of system components and piping. A suitable means of pressure relief should be provided if necessary.

A-4.3.8.1 The spacing of automatic detection equipment for systems installed for protection against fire exposure might call for a different arrangement from that required for other types of systems.

A-4.3.8.5 See NFPA 70, *National Electrical Code*, Chapter 5, particularly Article 500.

A-4.4.1.4 The friction losses in piping carrying foam concentrate can be calculated by using the Darcy formula.

$$\text{Darcy formula: } \Delta P = 0.000216 \left(\frac{f L \rho Q^2}{d^5} \right)$$

$$\text{Reynolds number: } \Delta R = \frac{50.6 Q \rho}{d \mu}$$

where:

ΔP = friction loss (psi)

L = length of pipe (ft)

f = friction factor

ρ = weight density of fluid (lb/ft³)

Q = flow (gpm)

d = pipe diameter (in.)

μ = absolute (dynamic) viscosity in centipoise

R = Reynolds number

A-4.4.2.2 Where the specified areas of demand are selected close to the source of supply, the higher available pressures can increase the flow beyond the capacity of the foam proportioning equipment.

A-4.4.2.3 Where excessive variations exist between calculated demand and available water supply, the actual excess discharge can exceed the capacity of the foam system to operate for the minimum 7-minute run time. A verification calculation should be made as follows:

Multiply the actual predicted system flow by the foam concentrate percentage, then divide this answer into the foam quantity as determined in 4-3.3.1. The time indicated should be 7 minutes or greater.

A-5-1 Underground mains and lead-in connections to system risers should be flushed through hydrants at dead ends of the system or through accessible aboveground flushing outlets,

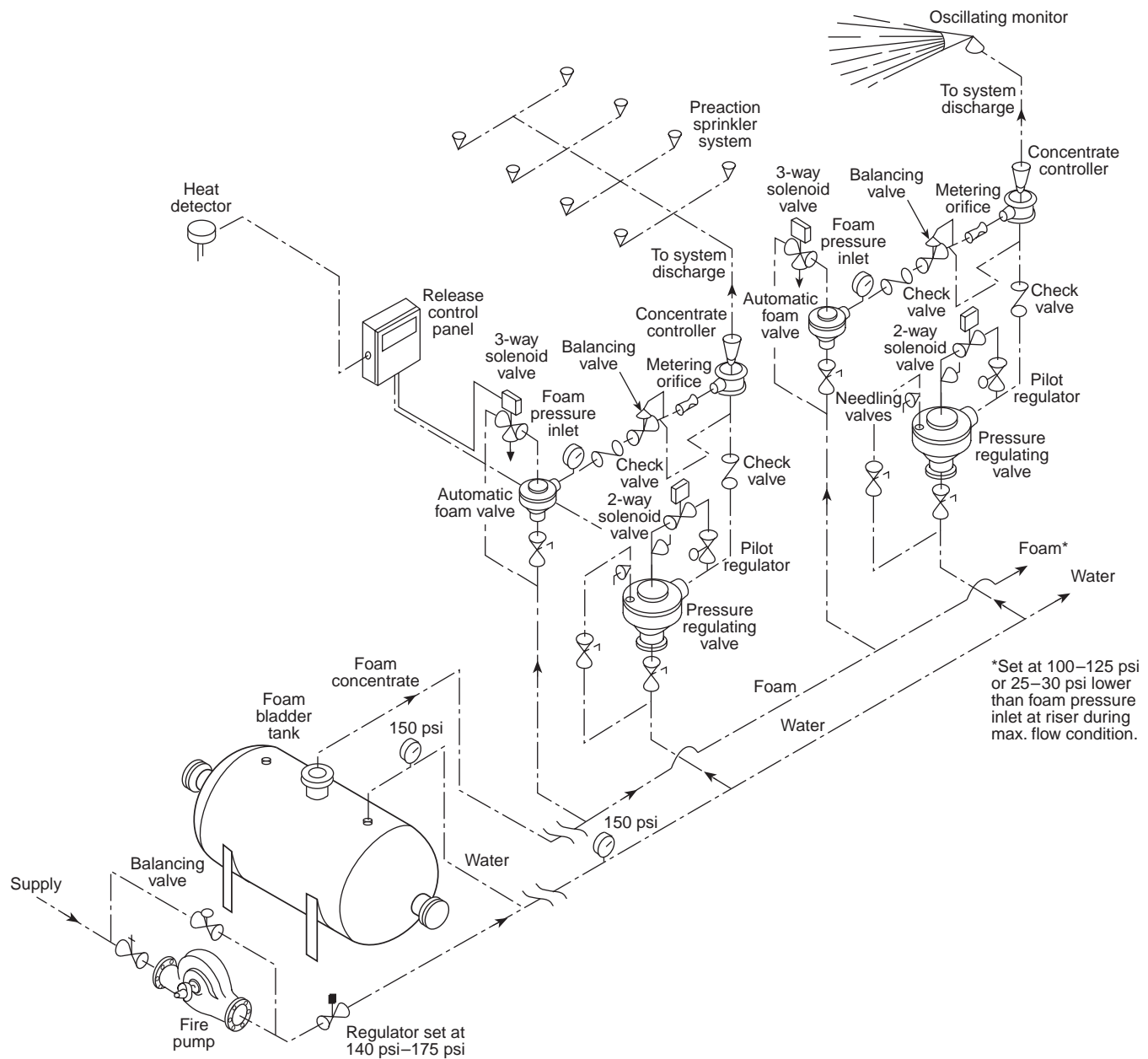


Figure A-2.4.2(h) In-line balanced-pressure proportioning system with bladder tank.

allowing the water to run until clear. If water is supplied from more than one source or from a looped system, divisional valves should be closed to produce a high-velocity flow through each single line.

It is recommended that foam concentrate lines be tested using foam concentrate as the testing medium.

A-5-2.1 To prevent the possibility of serious water damage in case of a break, pressure should be maintained during the 2-hour test period by a small-capacity pump, with the main controlling gate closed tightly during this period.

A-5-2.2 See NFPA 24, *Standard for the Installation of Private Fire Service Mains and Their Appurtenances*.

A-5-3.1 The following are acceptance test recommendations.

(a) All tests should be made by the contractor in the presence of the inspector for the authority having jurisdiction.

(b) Before asking for final approval of the protective equipment by the authority having jurisdiction, installation companies should furnish a written statement to the effect that the work covered by its contract has been completed and all specified flushing of underground, lead-in, and system piping has been successfully completed, together with specified hydrostatic pressure tests and system-foam discharge tests.

(c) The samples of the contractor's material and test certificates for aboveground and underground piping that appear in Chapter 1 of NFPA 13, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems*, can be useful to the contractor as a guide in filing written statements as described in A-5-3.1(b).