

PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT[661]

Adopted and Filed

Rulemaking related to licensing of fire protection system contractors

The State Fire Marshal hereby rescinds Chapter 275, “Licensing of Fire Protection System Contractors,” Iowa Administrative Code, and adopts a new chapter with the same title.

Legal Authority for Rulemaking

This rulemaking is adopted under the authority provided in Iowa Code section 100C.7.

State or Federal Law Implemented

This rulemaking implements, in whole or in part, Iowa Code chapters 17A and 100C and section 272C.12.

Purpose and Summary

This rulemaking repromulgates Chapter 275 and implements Iowa Code section 100C.7 in accordance with the goals and directives of Executive Order 10 (January 10, 2023). These rules establish a fire protection system contractor license program pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 100C. The rules explain the requirements for an individual to qualify and be designated as a responsible managing employee by a contractor seeking to obtain a license. The rules explain the requirements and process for licensure as a fire protection system contractor. The rules inform licensees and the public of the procedure for submitting complaints; the reasons for which a license may be denied, suspended or revoked; and the process by which the decision may be appealed. Pursuant to Iowa Code section 272C.12, the rules explain the process and requirements for licensure of persons licensed in other jurisdictions.

Public Comment and Changes to Rulemaking

Notice of Intended Action for this rulemaking was published in the Iowa Administrative Bulletin on January 24, 2024, as **ARC 7334C**. Public hearings were held on February 13, 2024, and February 14, 2024, at 10 a.m. at 6200 Park Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa, and virtually. No one attended the public hearings. No public comments were received. No changes from the Notice have been made.

Adoption of Rulemaking

This rulemaking was adopted by the Department of Inspections, Appeals, and Licensing on March 18, 2024.

Fiscal Impact

This rulemaking does not have a fiscal impact to the State of Iowa in an amount requiring a fiscal impact statement pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.4(4).

Jobs Impact

After analysis and review of this rulemaking, no impact on jobs has been found.

Waivers

Any person who believes that the application of the discretionary provisions of this rulemaking would result in hardship or injustice to that person may petition the Department for a waiver of the discretionary provisions, if any, pursuant to 481—Chapter 6.

Review by Administrative Rules Review Committee

The Administrative Rules Review Committee, a bipartisan legislative committee which oversees rulemaking by executive branch agencies, may, on its own motion or on written request by any individual or group, review this rulemaking at its [regular monthly meeting](#) or at a special meeting. The Committee's meetings are open to the public, and interested persons may be heard as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.8(6).

Effective Date

This rulemaking will become effective on May 22, 2024.

The following rulemaking action is adopted:

ITEM 1. Rescind 661—Chapter 275 and adopt the following **new** chapter in lieu thereof:

CHAPTER 275
LICENSING OF FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEM CONTRACTORS

661—275.1(100C) Establishment of program. The fire protection system contractor license is established pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 100C.

275.1(1) Licensure required. No person shall act as a fire extinguishing system contractor without being currently licensed as a fire protection system contractor by the department.

275.1(2) Endorsement. The licensure of each contractor will carry an endorsement for one or more of the following:

- a. Automatic sprinkler system installation.
- b. Special hazards systems installation.
- c. Preengineered dry chemical or wet agent fire suppression systems installation.
- d. Preengineered water-based fire suppression systems in one- and two-family dwellings installation.
- e. Automatic sprinkler system maintenance inspection.
- f. Special hazards system maintenance inspection.
- g. Preengineered dry chemical or wet agent fire suppression systems maintenance inspection.
- h. Preengineered water-based fire suppression systems in one- and two-family dwellings maintenance inspection.

Any person acting as a fire extinguishing system contractor shall do so only in relation to systems covered by the endorsements on the contractor's license.

275.1(3) Length of licensure. A license is normally for one year and expires on March 31 each year. A license which is effective on a date other than April 1 is effective on the date on which the license is issued and expires on March 31 of the following year.

661—275.2(100C) Definitions. The following definitions apply:

"Aerosol fire extinguishing system" means a system that uses a combination of microparticles and gaseous matter to flood the protected area. The particles are in a vapor state until discharged from the device. On release, a chain reaction produces solid particles and gaseous matter to suppress the fire.

"Automatic dry-chemical extinguishing system" means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 100C.1(4).

"Automatic fire extinguishing system" means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 100C.1(5).

"Automatic sprinkler system" means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 100C.1(6).

"Carbon dioxide extinguishing system" means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 100C.1(7).

"Clean agent" means an electrically nonconducting, volatile, or gaseous fire extinguishant that does not leave a residue upon evaporation.

"Deluge system" means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 100C.1(8).

"Dry chemical" means a powder composed of very small particles, usually sodium bicarbonate-, potassium bicarbonate-, or ammonium phosphate-based, with added particulate material supplemented

by special treatment to provide resistance to packing, resistance to moisture absorption (caking), and the proper flow capabilities.

“Dry pipe sprinkler system” means an extinguishing system employing automatic sprinklers that are attached to a piping system containing 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, which allows the water to flow into the piping system and out the opened sprinklers.

“Fire extinguishing system contractor,” “fire protection system contractor,” or *“contractor”* means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 100C.1(10).

“Foam extinguishing system” means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 100C.1(11).

“Halogenated extinguishing system” means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 100C.1(12).

“Hybrid-inert water mist system” means a system that combines the benefits of inert gas systems and water mist systems to extinguish fires. These systems provide both extinguishment and cooling to prevent reignition utilizing nontoxic, non-ozone-depleting hybrid media.

“Layout” means drawings, calculations and component specifications to achieve the specified system design installation. *“Layout”* does not include design.

“Listed” means equipment, materials, or services included in a list published by a nationally recognized independent testing organization 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 appropriate designated standards or has been tested and found suitable for a specified purpose.

“Maintenance inspection” means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 100C.1(13).

“Preengineered dry chemical or wet agent fire suppression system” means any system having predetermined flow rates, nozzle pressures and limited quantities of either agent. These systems have specific pipe sizes, maximum and minimum pipe lengths, flexible hose specifications, number of fittings and number and types of nozzles prescribed by a nationally recognized testing laboratory. The hazards against which these systems protect are specifically limited by the testing laboratory as to the type and size based upon actual fire tests. Limitations on hazards that can be protected against by these systems are contained in the manufacturer’s installation manual, which is referenced as part of the listing.

“Preengineered water-based system” means a packaged, water-based sprinkler system including all components connected to a water supply and designed to be installed according to pretested limitations.

“Responsible managing employee” means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 100C.1(14).

“Special hazards system” means a fire extinguishing system utilizing fire detection and control methods to release an extinguishing agent, other than water connected to a dedicated fire protection water supply.

“Wet agent” or *“wet chemical”* means an aqueous solution of organic or inorganic salts or a combination thereof that forms an extinguishing agent.

661—275.3(100C) Responsible managing employee. Each fire extinguishing system contractor shall designate a responsible managing employee and may designate one or more alternate responsible managing employees. A contractor may designate more than one responsible managing employee in order to satisfy the requirements for more than one endorsement as provided in subrule 275.1(2). If more than one responsible managing employee is designated, the contractor will indicate for which responsible managing employee each designated alternate managing employee serves as an alternate.

275.3(1) The responsible managing employee or employees shall be designated in the application for licensure, and, if a responsible managing employee is no longer acting in that role, the contractor shall so notify the department, in writing, within 30 calendar days.

275.3(2) If a responsible managing employee is no longer acting in that role and the contractor has designated an alternate responsible managing employee, the alternate responsible managing employee will become the responsible managing employee and the contractor shall so notify the department, in writing, within 30 calendar days of the date on which the preceding responsible managing employee ceased to act in that role. If the contractor has designated more than one alternate responsible managing

employee, the notice to the department will indicate which alternate responsible managing employee has assumed the position of responsible managing employee.

275.3(3) If a responsible managing employee designated by a fire extinguishing system contractor is no longer acting in the role of responsible managing employee and the contractor has not designated an alternate responsible managing employee, the contractor shall designate a new responsible managing employee and shall notify the department, in writing, of the designation within six months of the date on which the former responsible managing employee ceased to act in that capacity. If the department has not been notified of the appointment of a new responsible managing employee within six months of the date on which a responsible managing employee ceased serving in that capacity, the department shall suspend the license of the fire protection system contractor.

275.3(4) Training requirements. A responsible managing employee or an alternate responsible managing employee shall meet one of the requirements for the following endorsements:

a. Automatic sprinkler system installation:

(1) Current licensure as a professional engineer by the Iowa engineering and land surveying examining board, with competence in fire extinguishing system design, or

(2) Current certification by the National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies (NICET) at level III or above in water-based systems layout.

b. Special hazards system installation:

(1) Current licensure as a professional engineer by the Iowa engineering and land surveying examining board, with competence in fire extinguishing system design, or

(2) Current certification by the NICET at level III or above in special hazard systems.

c. Preengineered dry chemical or wet agent fire suppression system installation:

(1) Current certification by the NICET at level II or above in special hazard systems, or

(2) Current certification by the National Association of Fire Equipment Distributors (NAFED) in preengineered kitchen fire suppression systems, preengineered industrial fire suppression systems, or both, or

(3) Satisfactory completion of any training required by the manufacturer for the installation of any system the contractor installs.

d. Preengineered water-based fire suppression system in one- and two-family dwellings installation:

(1) Current certification by the NICET at level II or above in special hazard systems, or

(2) Satisfactory completion of any training required by the manufacturer for the installation of any system the contractor installs.

e. Automatic sprinkler system maintenance inspection:

(1) Current certification from the NICET at level II in water-based system layout, or

(2) Current certification by the NICET at level II or above in inspection and testing of water-based systems.

f. Special hazards system maintenance inspection:

(1) Current certification by the NICET at level II or above in special hazard systems.

(2) Reserved.

g. Preengineered dry chemical or wet agent fire suppression system maintenance inspection:

(1) Current certification by the NICET at level I or above in special hazard systems, or

(2) Current certification by the NAFED in preengineered kitchen fire suppression systems, preengineered industrial fire suppression systems, or both, or

(3) Satisfactory completion of any training required by the manufacturer for the maintenance and inspection of any system the contractor inspects.

h. Preengineered water-based fire suppression system maintenance inspection:

(1) Current certification by the NICET at level I or above in special hazard systems, or

(2) Satisfactory completion of any training required by the manufacturer for the maintenance and inspection of any system the contractor inspects.

275.3(5) Training or testing approval. Satisfactory completion of an applicable training or testing program that has been approved by the department may replace any of the endorsement requirements of

subrule 275.3(4). In any case in which training or testing that is offered to satisfy the requirements of this rule is required to be approved by the department, such approval is required prior to acceptance of the training or testing to meet licensure requirements. Approval by the department of any training or testing to meet these requirements may be sought by the individual, firm, or organization providing the testing or training or initiated by the department. Any individual, firm or organization seeking to obtain such approval will apply to the department no later than July 1 every odd-numbered year. Program information and any other documentation requested by the department for consideration shall be submitted to the department. Training and testing approved by the department is listed on the department's licensing website.

275.3(6) License applicability. Work performed by a contractor subject to these rules shall be limited to areas of competence indicated by the specific certification or other training requirements met by the responsible managing employee. Work performed in the state shall not begin prior to:

- a. Receipt of new or renewed license issued by the department to the applicant, or
- b. Receipt of written approval to perform work prior to issuance of a new or renewed license from the department to the applicant.

275.3(7) Portable fire extinguisher requirements. Nothing in this rule shall be interpreted to conflict with or diminish any requirement for training or certification for anyone installing or servicing a fire extinguishing system or portable fire extinguisher set forth in any rule of the department or local fire ordinance or standard adopted by reference therein.

275.3(8) Licensure of persons licensed in other jurisdictions. A fire protection system contractor license may be issued without examination to a person licensed in other jurisdictions if the conditions of Iowa Code section 272C.12 are met.

661—275.4(100C) License requirements. A fire extinguishing system contractor shall meet all of the following requirements in order to receive licensure from the department and continue to meet all requirements throughout the period of licensure. The contractor shall notify the department, in writing, within 30 calendar days if the contractor fails to meet any requirement for licensure.

275.4(1) The contractor shall designate one or more responsible managing employees as provided in rule 661—275.3(100C).

275.4(2) The contractor shall maintain general and complete operations liability insurance for the layout, installation, repair, alteration, addition, maintenance, and inspection of automatic fire extinguishing systems in the following amounts: \$500,000 per person, \$1,000,000 per occurrence, and \$1,000,000 property damage.

a. The carrier of any insurance coverage maintained to meet this requirement shall notify the department 30 days prior to the effective date of cancellation or reduction of the coverage.

b. The contractor shall cease operation immediately if the insurance coverage required by this subrule is no longer in force and other insurance coverage meeting the requirements of this subrule is not in force. A contractor shall not initiate any installation of a fire extinguishing system that cannot reasonably be expected to be completed prior to the effective date of the cancellation of the insurance coverage required by this subrule and of which the contractor has received notice, unless new insurance coverage meeting the requirements of this subrule has been obtained and will be in force upon cancellation of the prior coverage.

275.4(3) The contractor shall maintain current registration as a contractor with the labor services division of the Iowa workforce development department in compliance with Iowa Code chapter 91C and 875—Chapter 150. The contractor shall provide a copy of the contractor's current registration from the Iowa workforce development department with the contractor's application for licensure.

EXCEPTION: A contractor will not be required to maintain registration with the labor services division of the Iowa workforce development department if the contractor does not meet the definition of "contractor" for purposes of Iowa Code chapter 91C and 875—Chapter 150. Written documentation of such exemption must be provided to the department at the time of application for licensure as a fire protection system contractor.

275.4(4) The contractor shall maintain compliance with all other applicable provisions of law related to operation in the state of Iowa and of any political subdivision in which the contractor is performing work.

275.4(5) A license may be renewed only if the licensee has completed recertification of the applicable requirements relative to the endorsements for which the licensee is renewing.

275.4(6) Any individual while serving honorably on federal active duty, state active duty, or national guard duty, as defined in Iowa Code section 29A.1, applying for licensure as a fire protection system contractor shall apply for licensure following 481—Chapter 7.

661—275.5(100C) Application and fees.

275.5(1) Application. Any contractor seeking licensure as a fire protection system contractor shall submit a completed application form to the department. The application shall be filed no later than 30 days prior to the date of beginning work in this state or the date on which an existing license expires. An application form may be obtained from the department or the department’s website. The application form shall be submitted with all required attachments and the required application fee. An application will not be considered complete unless all required information is submitted, including required attachments and fees, and will not be processed until it is complete.

275.5(2) License fee.

a. The license fee is \$500 for one year.

b. If an application for licensure provides for more than one responsible managing employee pursuant to rule 661—275.3(100C), there will be an additional fee of \$50 for each responsible managing employee beyond the first. If an application for licensure provides for more than one endorsement as provided in subrule 275.1(2), there will be an additional fee of \$50 for each endorsement beyond the first.

c. The department will waive any fee charged to an applicant for a license if the applicant’s household income does not exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty income guidelines and the applicant is applying for the license for the first time in this state.

275.5(3) Payment. The license fee may be submitted electronically or delivered by draft, check, or money order in the applicable amount payable to the department. Cash payments are not accepted.

275.5(4) Amended license.

a. The fee for issuance of an amended license is the difference between the original license fee paid and changes in endorsement(s) or responsible managing employee(s), if applicable. The fee shall be submitted with the request for an amended license.

b. A contractor will request and the department will issue an amended license for any of the following reasons, and a fee does not apply:

- (1) A change in the designation of a responsible managing employee;
- (2) A change in insurance coverage; or
- (3) A change in any other material information included in or with the initial or renewal application.

A change in the address of the business is a material change.

c. Other changes in the information required in the application form, including renewal of insurance coverage with a new expiration date, shall be reported to the department but will not require issuance of an amended license or payment of the amended license fee.

275.5(5) Attachments. Required attachments to the application for licensure are outlined on the department’s website.

661—275.6(100C) Complaints. Complaints regarding the performance of any licensed contractor, failure of a licensed contractor to meet any of the requirements established in Iowa Code chapter 100C or this chapter or any other provision of law, or operation as a fire extinguishing system contractor without licensure may be filed with the department. Complaints should be as specific as possible and clearly identify the contractor against whom the complaint is filed. Complaints should be submitted in writing to the department as indicated on the department’s website. A complaint may be submitted

anonymously, but if the name and contact information of the complainant are provided, the complainant will be notified of the disposition of the complaint.

661—275.7(100C) Denial, suspension, or revocation of licensure; civil penalties; and appeals. The department may deny, suspend, or revoke the license of a contractor, or assess a civil penalty to the contractor, if any provision of these rules or any other provision of law related to operation as a fire extinguishing system contractor is violated.

275.7(1) Denial. The department may deny an application for licensure for reasons including, but not limited to:

a. If the applicant makes a false statement on the application form or in any other submission of information required for license. “False statement” means providing false information or failing to include material information, such as a previous criminal conviction or action taken by another jurisdiction, when requested on the application form or otherwise in the application process.

b. If the applicant fails to meet all of the requirements for licensure established in this chapter.

c. If the applicant is currently barred for cause from acting as a fire extinguishing system contractor in another jurisdiction.

d. If an applicant has previously been barred for cause from operating in another jurisdiction as a fire extinguishing system contractor and if the basis of that action reflects upon the integrity of the applicant in operating as a fire extinguishing system contractor. If an applicant is found to have been previously barred for cause from operating as a fire extinguishing system contractor in another jurisdiction and is no longer barred from doing so, the department will evaluate the record of that action with regard to the likelihood that the applicant would operate with integrity as a licensed contractor. If an applicant is denied under this provision, the applicant will be notified of the specific reasons for the denial.

e. Conviction of a felony offense, if the offense directly relates to the profession or occupation of the licensee, in the courts of this state or another state, territory or country. “Conviction” as used in this subrule includes a conviction of an offense that if committed in this state would be a felony without regard to its designation elsewhere, and includes a finding or verdict of guilt made or returned in a criminal proceeding even if the adjudication of guilt is withheld or not entered. A certified copy of the final order or judgment of conviction or plea of guilty in this state or in another state constitutes conclusive evidence of the conviction. If an applicant is denied under this provision, the applicant will be notified of the specific reasons for the denial.

f. Knowingly making misleading, deceptive, untrue or fraudulent representations in the practice of the licensee’s profession or engaging in unethical conduct or practice harmful or detrimental to the public. Proof of actual injury need not be established.

g. Willful or repeated violations of the provisions of this chapter.

275.7(2) Suspension. A suspension of a license may be imposed by the department for any violation of these rules or Iowa Code chapter 100C or for a failure to meet any legal requirement to operate as a fire extinguishing system contractor in this state. Failure to provide any notice to the department as provided in these rules will be grounds for suspension. An order of suspension will specify the length of the suspension and will specify that correction of all conditions that were a basis for the suspension is a condition of reinstatement of the license even after the period of the suspension.

275.7(3) Revocation.

a. A revocation is a termination of a license. A license may be revoked by the department for repeated violations or for a violation that creates an imminent danger to the safety or health of individuals protected by a fire extinguishing system incorrectly installed by a licensed contractor or when information comes to the attention of the department which, if known to the department when the application was being considered, would have resulted in denial of the license.

b. A new application for licensure from a contractor whose license had previously been revoked will not be considered for a period of one year after the effective date of the revocation and, in any event, until every condition that was a basis for the revocation has been corrected. The department may specify in the revocation order a longer period than one year before a new application for licensure may

be considered. When a new application for licensure from a contractor whose license was previously revoked is being considered, the applicant may be denied licensure based upon the same information that was the basis for revocation even after any such period established by the department has expired.

275.7(4) *Disqualifications for criminal convictions limited.* A person's conviction of a crime may be grounds for the denial, revocation, or suspension of a license in circumstances authorized by Iowa Code section 272C.15.

275.7(5) *Civil penalties.* The department may impose a civil penalty of up to \$500 per day during which a violation has occurred and for every day until the violation is corrected. A civil penalty may be imposed in lieu of or in addition to a suspension or may be imposed in addition to a revocation. A civil penalty will not be imposed in lieu of a revocation.

275.7(6) *Appeals.* Any denial, suspension, or revocation of a license, or any civil penalty imposed upon a licensed contractor under this rule may be appealed by the contractor within 14 days of receipt of the notice by submitting a written request for a contested case appeal to the department. An appeal is subject to the provisions of 481—Chapters 9 and 10 governing contested cases.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code chapter 100C.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: For replacement pages for IAC, see IAC Supplement 4/17/24.