



Orange County Fire Authority

Planning and Development

INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN 10-99

Subject: Orange County Fire Authority Inspection of Public School Facilities during Construction

In 2007-2011, U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated average of 4,060 structure fires in educational properties, annually. These fires caused an annual average of 85 civilian fire injuries and \$92 million in direct property damage.¹ In this same time frame, the Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) responded to 214 fires in educational properties which resulted in nearly \$650,000 in property damage.

This bulletin is intended to provide clarification regarding the inspection of public school facilities under construction. This bulletin applies to facilities intended to serve grades kindergarten through the 12th grade and community college students. The OCFA recognizes the California Division of the State Architect (DSA) as the governmental authority having jurisdiction over these construction projects. As such, OCFA staff is not required to conduct inspections of fire and life safety systems during construction. While DSA has final plan approval authority, it is DSA policy to have the local fire authority review certain components of the design for compatibility with their emergency response and fire fighting capabilities. Therefore, OCFA provides review of proposed projects for compliance with emergency vehicle access, fire flow, and fire hydrant, control valve, and fire department connection (FDC) locations required by state codes.

In order to ensure the emergency access and various fire protection features are provided in a way that gives the greatest benefit during an emergency; and to facilitate the OCFA Planning and Development Services Section's ability to transition these projects into the OCFA annual inspection program, the following site meeting/inspections are requested during the construction process:

- **Pre-Construction** – The purpose of this meeting is to develop a point of contact for both the School District and OCFA. In addition, proposed site improvement work providing emergency access, fire hydrant, control valve and FDC locations can be verified against plans approved by the California DSA and reviewed by OCFA.
- **50% Completed** – This meeting and inspection will allow the OCFA inspector to provide documents that will require completion prior to transition into the annual inspection program. These include basic building data (OCFA New Occupancy Form), Chemical Classification Packet, **hazardous material disclosure through OC CUPA**, etc. These documents will allow OCFA to issue use permits at the completion of the project (e.g., place of assembly, haz-mat, etc.). The OCFA inspector may request additional information to facilitate the permit issuance process as authorized by 2013 CFC, Section 105.
- **100% Completion** – This final meeting and inspection will allow the OCFA inspector to verify issues that will directly impact OCFA's ability to provide emergency services to the project site, fire alarm instruction and annunciator panel identification, and fire alarm Central Station monitoring procedures. In addition, all documentation requested during the 50% inspection should be complete so that permit issuance can occur in a timely manner. Should the OCFA inspector identify items that would traditionally be the responsibility of DSA, the OCFA inspector will make both verbal and written notification of the item to the DSA representative with applicable State code references.

Note: All requests for site meetings and/or inspection must be scheduled a minimum of 48 hours in advance. Call (714) 573- 6150 to schedule these activities.

*Bulletin 10-99 last issued December 8, 2009

¹Structure Fires in Educational Properties, Jennifer D. Flynn, NFPA Fire Analysis and Research Division, Quincy, MA, August 2009.