

## **HVAC Fire Safety Certified Professionals Mean Safer Buildings For Owners and Occupants**

According to the Department of Homeland Security/FEMA June 2004 Topical Fire Research Series, Volume 3, Issue 10, commercial, institutional and industrial facilities fires in the United States were responsible for \$2.8 billion in property losses during the year 2000, as taken from data reported by the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS). NFIRS data also show that, while commercial, institutional, and industrial facility fires accounted for only 8% of all fires in the United States and only one quarter of all structural fires, they were the most costly.

During the past decade, many advancements in fire reporting and fire and smoke safety systems have led to a decline in the overall cost of non-residential structural fires. However, there is still an economic, physical, and human impact at risk when fire safety systems fail to work appropriately.

Today's building construction and maintenance codes call for design, installation and upkeep of integrated fire and smoke controls. Inspection and code certification of fire and smoke protection and safety systems are stringent and can be complex. The difference between structural and economic loss and the increased insurance that fire safety systems are capable of appropriate protection can come down to the knowledge and training of the professionals who maintain them.

The National Energy Management Institute (NEMI) recently hit a landmark number in their HVAC Fire Life Safety Certified Technician program. 1000 HVAC technicians have been certified in HVAC fire and safety installation and maintenance competency in just under two years. This means that 1000 highly trained, specifically skilled and specialized HVAC professionals are in demand in the nation's building construction market to install and service complex fire, smoke, and combination fire/smoke dampers and ceiling dampers within HVAC systems.

"This program will help keep safe the citizens across the entire United States and Canada to a greater degree in the event of commercial and industrial facilities fires, and I am proud to say that this increased level of safety is ensured by members of the Sheet Metal Workers International Association," states John Hamilton, COO of the Testing, Adjusting and Balancing Bureau, the certification arm of NEMI. Hamilton notes that more and more states are passing legislation to mandate complex code enforcement of fire safety systems in public buildings. NEMI's HVAC Fire Life Safety Certified Technician program ensures that certified individuals possess highly specific skills in National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), state, and local building codes. They also have intricate knowledge of fire and smoke control system design and testing criteria as defined by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), International Fire Code, and the Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association (SMACNA).

"NEMI Fire Life Safety Certification means that qualified professionals are capable of implementing overall system performance testing of fire, smoke, and fire/smoke combination dampers and interconnected elements to verify life safety compliance," says NEMI Program Administrator, Anthony Picarazzi. "They also are trained to review and assess HVAC engineering design and specifications. In addition to these attributes, NEMI Fire Life Safety

Certification also means that certified technicians are qualified to implement inspections and provide service and follow-up inspection and testing,” notes Picarazzi.

When NEMI Fire Life Safety Certified Technicians are called in to install, test, and maintain HVAC fire and smoke safety systems, public and commercial building owners and occupants know that they are in the hands of a professional qualified to assure their property and their lives are fully protected.

For more information on the NEMI HVAC Fire Life Safety Certification, other NEMI certification programs, and test criteria for certification as provided through NEMI’s testing division, the Testing, Adjusting, and Balancing Bureau, please contact 703.299.5646 or visit [www.nemi.org](http://www.nemi.org) and [www.tabbcertified.org](http://www.tabbcertified.org).

### Article to HVAC Professionals

#### **NEMI Opening New Doors in HVAC Professional Opportunities With the HVAC Fire Life Safety Certified Technician Program**

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Hamilton also notes that individuals certified under the NEMI Fire Life Safety Program have even greater opportunity within the HVAC industry. “Certification of this kind means that an HVAC professional has put in a great deal of time and effort to increase their marketability across various functions of the industry,” Hamilton says. “NEMI’s Fire Life Safety Program completion, coupled with other TABB HVAC industry certifications, puts professionals in high demand in an industry that continues to become more advanced and complex.” NEMI Fire Life Safety Certification means that qualified professionals are capable of implementing overall system performance testing of fire, smoke, and fire/smoke combination dampers and interconnected elements to verify life safety compliance. They also are trained to review and

assess HVAC engineering design and specifications. In addition to these attributes, NEMI Fire Life Safety Certification also means that certified technicians are qualified to implement inspections and provide service and follow-up inspection and testing.

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Picarazzi notes that when NEMI Fire Life Safety Certified Technicians are called in to install, test, and maintain HVAC fire and smoke safety systems, public and commercial building owners and occupants know that they are in the hands of a professional qualified to assure their property and their lives are fully protected.

Today’s building construction and maintenance codes call for design, installation and upkeep of integrated fire and smoke controls. Inspection and code certification of fire and smoke protection and safety systems are stringent and can be complex. The difference between structural and economic loss and the increased insurance that fire safety systems are capable of appropriate protection can come down to the knowledge and training of the professionals who maintain them. NEMI Fire Life Safety Certified Technicians are in demand and opportunities for these highly trained professionals are even greater.

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