



## **FIRE PREVENTION MANUAL**

### **CODE REQUIREMENTS**

#### **402.015 HAZARD IDENTIFICATION SIGNS (NFPA 704 PLACARDS)**

**EFFECTIVE: JULY 2010**

### **SCOPE**

This policy clarifies the Fresno Fire Department (FFD or Department) requirements for the installation and location(s) of hazard identification signs (NFPA 704 placards) for sites, buildings and occupancies within the City of Fresno and contract service areas.

### **PURPOSE**

This policy has been established to provide direction for the installation and location of NFPA 704 placards for sites, buildings and occupancies as required in the *California Fire Code (CFC)*.

### **BACKGROUND**

As noted in the *CFC*, the fire code official has the authority to formulate policies they deem necessary based upon local conditions including for the installation and location of NFPA 704 placards for sites, buildings or occupancies.

The intent of this policy is to ensure the safety of the public and emergency responders by making them aware of the majority of hazards that may be present in the majority of buildings or occupancies where the hazards exist. As noted in NFPA 704, this marking system is intended to provide a "simple, recognizable and easily understood system of markings that provides a general idea of the hazards of a material and the severity of these hazards as they relate to emergency response".

In some individual cases, the requirements may appear to be onerous and the Department recognizes that there will be outliers (either when NFPA 704 placards are required or where NFPA 704 placards are required). The Department also recognizes that this will occur no matter what criteria is used for making a determination on when or where to require NFPA 704 placards shall be installed.

However, on the whole, these requirements should provide an appropriate balance between alerting the public and emergency responders of the hazards present in any given location and to being exposed to such a large number of NFPA 704

placards that a person becomes desensitized to the warning the NFPA 704 placards represent.

## REQUIREMENTS

Based upon the need for uniformity in application across the Department's diverse service delivery area, and after careful deliberation, the Department has determined the following:

The initial determination for the required installation of NFPA 704 placards shall be made based upon number 1 and 2 below, respectively. Each material shall be classified in each category as noted in the applicable chapter of NFPA 704.

1. Any material, in any category (i.e. health, flammability, or reactivity) having a classification ranking of 3 or higher shall have NFPA 704 placards installed as noted in this policy.

Exception:

- a. Sites, buildings or occupancies containing only flammable liquids (any class) shall not be required to install NFPA 704 placards unless the quantity of the flammable liquids is 56 gallons or greater of cumulative total volume.
  - b. Sites, buildings or occupancies containing only flammable liquids (any class) which are stored in underground storage tanks, shall not be required to install NFPA 704 placards.
2. Any material which is water reactive, is an oxidizing agent, or is subject to special engineering controls (i.e. the material is required to be handled with specialized personal protective equipment or within a controlled environment, for instance a fume hood) shall have NFPA 704 placards installed as noted in this policy.

If the material does not meet either of the above criteria, determination for the required installation of NFPA 704 placards shall be made based upon number three below:

3. A material in any category (i.e. health, flammability, or reactivity) having a classification ranking of 1 or 2 shall have NFPA 704 placards installed as noted in this policy when the material exceeds the threshold amounts noted below:

Liquids: 1,001 gallons or more of cumulative total volume.

Gases: In any form (liquefied, compressed, etc.) in excess of 1,001 liquid gallons or 130 cubic ft. of cumulative total volume.

Solids: 100 lbs. by weight of cumulative total weight.

When NFPA 704 placard installation is required based on the criteria noted above, the NFPA 704 placards shall have the highest numerical rating placed in each category, and the NFPA 704 placards shall be installed at each of the following locations:

1. The address side of the building, directly adjacent to the main public entrance door. The NFPA 704 placard on the building shall be a minimum of 5 inch by 5 inch.
2. Where a site contains multiple buildings, in addition to the number one installation requirements above, each building containing material requiring to be identified by this policy shall have NFPA 704 placards installed directly adjacent to the main entrance door to the building. The sign on the building shall be a minimum of 5 inch by 5 inch.
3. In addition to the installation requirements for number 1 and 2 above, each building, site or occupancy containing materials required to be identified by this policy shall have NFPA 704 placards installed at each principal means of access to the site, for instance on an access gate. Signs on the access gates shall be a minimum of 12 inch by 12 inch.

NFPA 704 placard installation requirements are not correlated with Department required hazardous materials permit requirements.

In every case, the Fire Marshal (or designee) has the authority to increase the number of NFPA 704 placards installed, require NFPA 704 placard installations at additional locations, or increase the sign dimensions.

Additional NFPA 704 placard requirements may be required and the determination shall be made at the sole discretion of the Fire Marshal (or designee).

## REFERENCES

*California Fire Code*  
*NFPA 704*