



Improving State Law on Smoke Control Systems and Fire and Smoke Control Dampers (19.27.700-740 and 2020 HB 2701)

Background

The Washington State Association of Fire Marshals (WSAFM) strongly supports inspection, testing and maintenance of smoke control systems as well as fire dampers, smoke dampers, and combination fire and smoke damper systems.

The Problem

During the 2020 legislative session, HB 2701 created RCW sections 19.27.700 through 19.27.740 titled "Fire and Smoke Control System Testing". WSAFM has been notified by fire departments, building owners, unions and trade groups of several barriers to implementation.

- Fire departments have found it difficult to implement the non-standard citation provisions that don't align with provisions in the adopted Fire Code and because they are required to transfer revenues to the state, this also created an unfunded mandate.
- Test plans for smoke control systems and inventories of dampers have been lost or damaged over the years. This is one of the primary barriers to keeping systems properly maintained.
- Most unions have been excluded from performing the work by HB 2701, even though those professions are required by national standards to be part of the smoke control testing team. These limits on labor supply make it difficult for building owners to hire contractors.

The Solution

WSAFM has prepared State [legislation](#) to improve RCW 19.27.700-740, together with a broad coalition of stakeholders including unions, engineers, community colleges, the National Fire Protection Association, fire departments, the State Fire Marshal's Office, building code officials, building owners and managers, independent contractors, and trade associations. We urge you to contact your state legislator or sign the [independent petition](#).

- Retain testing requirements and frequencies from HB 2701;
- Return to standard provisions in the Fire Code and City ordinances regarding penalties and violations.
- Provide fair and appropriate qualifications for personnel reflecting the full range of unions and professions required to safely maintain the systems;
- Require the State Building Code Council to provide the clarity around the 2018 building and fire code guidance on "special inspections" for smoke control systems, provide building owners a timeframe to inventory their systems and have a professional testing plan developed, and add the provisions to the WAC to aid their enforcement.

Mission: To provide leadership and professional development opportunities for our members and partners through communication, education, legislation, and code development

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