

# LISTENING TO LUMINARY

## INTERVIEW COLUMN, FEATURING

# MR. JIM PAULEY

President & CEO of  
National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)



# NFPA

### *I: Introductory segment about NFPA for the benefit of readers*



NFPA is a global self-funded non-profit organization, established in 1896 and located in Quincy, Massachusetts, USA. It also has international representation, covering the Asia/Pacific region, Europe and Latin America, countries in the Middle East and North Africa so as to advance the use and adoption of NFPA codes and standards throughout their territories.

The entity is devoted to eliminating death, injury, property, and economic loss due to fire, electrical and related hazards.

The association delivers information and knowledge through more than 300 consensus codes and standards, research work, training, education, outreach and advocacy. Besides, the organization also partners with others who share an interest in furthering the NFPA mission which is to help save lives and reduce loss with information, knowledge as well as passion.

**Catalogue:** The NFPA online catalogue provides a direct way for customers to purchase the codes/ standards, companion products and public education materials.

**Website:** [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org), offers a wide range of building, electrical, fire and life safety content and resources including blogs, podcasts, videos, white papers, fact sheets, research, NFPA Journal and more.

**Codes and Standards:** NFPA is widely known as a 'codes and standards organization' – that's the backbone of what they do. They work to provide society with the information and knowledge which are essential to do a job well and better in today's ever-changing environment. The 300-plus codes and standards are designed to minimize the risks and effects of fire by establishing criteria for building process, design, service, and installation around the world. The more than 250 technical committees, comprised of approximately 9,000 volunteers review public inputs and vote on the revisions as part of a consensus process. Very importantly, all NFPA codes and standards are accredited by the American National Standards Institution (ANSI) and accepted worldwide.

### *II: Profile of the interviewee*

i) **General:** Name: **Mr. Jim Pauley**, President & CEO, NFPA as well as the Serving Chairman on the Board of NFPA Research Foundation. Native of Greenup County, Kentucky, USA

ii) **Educational:** B.S. Electrical Engineering, University of Kentucky, 1986.

iii) **Professional:** Worked in Lexington, Kentucky, with Schneider Electric, a \$31 billion multinational electrical distribution and energy management firm based in France. At Schneider, Jim served as senior vice president for external affairs and government relations since 2011, after six previous positions with the company ranging between vice president to applications engineer.

iv) **Immediate past tenure at Schneider Electric:** Pauley's arrival at NFPA was preceded by a 29-year career with Schneider Electric, where he served most recently as senior vice president for external affairs and government relations as a member of the company's U.S. executive management team. His professional career journey began in 1985 as applications engineer with Square D, an electrical equipment manufacturer. Schneider acquired Square D in 1991, a move that provided him with a larger, more international perspective on the industry, one put to good use in his own career.

At Schneider, Jim also worked in product development and marketing as well as global standards strategy formulation before becoming director of codes and standards. He was also the vice president of industry standards and government relations for a decade before assuming the senior vice president job in 2011.

v) **NFPA specific:** After nearly 30 years in the electrical industry, Jim takes on a new role as NFPA's seventh president. He started the new journey on July 1, 2014 and 25 days later celebrated his 50th birthday. "This appears to be an interesting age when I would decide to go and

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do something else," Pauley quotes. That "something else" was succeeding the incumbent Mr. Jim Shannon to become the seventh president of NFPA following a unanimous vote by NFPA's Board of Directors.

Accordingly, Pauley assumed the new duties after a month-long transition period with Shannon and the association's executive staff. In fact, he had a sudden uprooting from native Kentucky—where he was raised in Greenup County, in the northeast part of the state. There Jim received a degree in electrical engineering from the University of Kentucky—to New England (USA). His decision to switch jobs after a 3 decade's long spell over there to move on to the top NFPA job was a little disconcerting to many of his friends, for obvious reasons. "People would call me up and say two things," Pauley says. They'd offer their congratulations, then immediately ask me, 'You're not going to become a Patriots fan, are you?' or, 'You're not going to become a Celtics fan, are you?' And I would just think, "Holy cow. This is a lot more complicated than I thought."

Pauley's mid-life transition isn't a complete surprise, considering his long affiliation with NFPA. He's been involved with National Electrical Code® committees and code-making panels since 1993, and served on the Standards Council beginning 2000, chairing the body since 2008. "I love the NFPA mission and the people I've worked with in this organization," he says. "After 29 years in the same place, you don't necessarily go hunting for a lot of different opportunities. But if there was one thing that was going to draw me away from Schneider Electric it would be the opportunity I've been given with NFPA."

### III: Interview Segment

Following are the responses from the dignitary to the questions initiated by

**KNK Murthy, Journal Executive Editor at the behest of FSAI**

**Q:** Respected sir, hearty and warm welcome to FSAI Journal. You have been very kind to appear in one of our highly popular and prestigious columns titled "Listening to Luminary". We could infer from the illustrious profile that you bring in a rich and long professional expertise which would prove complementary while adoring the coveted position of the President of NFPA. In this context, let us begin the discussion by seeking some relevant information about your transition from the commercial business management sector to a non-profit organization. Based on the back up strength gained all through your previous careers, what all could be the major attributes which are likely to help promote the 'NFPA global vision' of eliminating death, injury, property, and economic loss due to fire, electrical and related hazards?

**R:** Prior to coming to NFPA nearly 7 years ago, I concluded a 30-year career in the electrical field. My father was an electrician, as was I, and then I tried electrical contracting before going to college to obtain an electrical engineering degree. Once I achieved

that, I began working for Square D Company, which ultimately became Schneider Electric.

I was actively involved in the NFPA standards development process for many years - providing input and comments, participating on committees and assuming leadership roles along the way. Standards support market standardization and business innovation; promoting health, safety and the environment; and saving time and money for government at all levels. All these seemed like a fantastic way to learn more about life safety and enrich my career. My standards involvement offered me exposure to all facets of the building, fire, electrical, and life safety industries, and helped me greatly in my external affairs and government relations role at Schneider and certainly as I lead NFPA today. I have tremendous respect for the value that NFPA brings to the public, government, and professionals across the globe. So, having the opportunity to lead this organization now is an honour.

NFPA operates with sound business

practices to ensure that we have the means to fulfil our mission to help save lives and reduce loss by sharing our subject matter expertise and by proactively addressing new hazards. The NFPA standards development process is an example of one of the most successful and longest running public private partnerships, and as such it is critical that we operate in a way that allows us to continue this important work.

**Q:** We are well acquainted with the great service that NFPA has offered during the past 125 years. The entity is widely respected and known, especially among professionals who are interested in building, electrical, fire and life safety attributes. The way every NFPA standard has been conceived, formulated, listed, compiled, registered, numbered, stored, and shared among different stakeholders is exceptionally unparalleled (again by any 'standard of perfection')! As a matter of fact, NFPA is a buzzword among all business management circles besides those who pursue fire service/life safety and occupational health functions as their career.

**In this context, what are the new challenges that you are addressing with amendments/changes in existing documents or the development of new standards.**

**R:** Thank you for recognizing the role that we play as a global leader and respected advocate for life safety, and for acknowledging the importance of standards in the modern world. Developing and updating codes and standards is one of the greatest ways that we can protect people and property. Our standards development process is the best because it harnesses recent thinking, incorporates updated research as well as applies learnings from the latest tragedies to inform guidance on persistent issues and new challenges. For example, the increased use of electric vehicles, larger and distributed energy storage systems, and taller buildings all present potential life safety risks. The entire world is dealing with increases in wildfire loss, an issue that needs to be tackled with the use of codes and standards in the built environment. Our standards also increasingly play a role in better protecting first responders during their all-hazards role.

It is important to note that NFPA information and knowledge is not limited to our codes and standards. NFPA is also well known for the training, public education materials and sought-after insights that we generate. We don't simply react to tragedies, we get out in front of issues and as evidenced over the last year during a global pandemic, we embrace our leadership role and provide much-needed, timely perspective through a myriad of NFPA channels and resources.

**Q:** What types of reviews and research are being undertaken to ensure that each standard becomes more reader as well as user friendly? This is in relation to a larger cross section of end users with different educational/professional backgrounds. They include Engineering, Technology, Science, Quality Control, research

**work, Marketing, Material handling, Administration, Fire safety, Occupational health and Environmental protection cum protection as well as preservation all of whom have to adopt NFPA codes and standards and compliance must be prioritized without any compromise.**

**R:** NFPA staff members do not write NFPA codes and standards. Technical committees comprised of subject matter experts, with a variety of interests and backgrounds, are assigned to standards with a defined scope of activities. These standards provide important and relevant benchmarks for building and life safety, electrical systems, fire protection systems, emergency response, community risk reduction, and many other areas of focus. Engineers, code enforcers, building owners, trade workers, manufacturers, insurance providers, regulatory agencies and the public at large rely on our guidance.

What we have seen in recent years though is that people don't simply want to read a full code book; they want specific information much faster via phones, tablets, desk top computers, and laptops and with an easy- to-use interface. Stakeholders want to understand problems and identify solutions so we developed NFPA LiNK™, our new digital content platform. LiNK launched in the fall and is designed to deliver seamless code information on demand. By the end of this year, the full set of NFPA codes and standards will be in LiNK, and when new editions are released, subscriptions will be automatically updated, and personal notations will carry over. Enhanced content is also being added on a regular basis to provide the context that stakeholders are seeking.

NFPA LiNK is transforming the way codes and standards information is being delivered. It allows people across the globe to access guidance faster and easier than ever before in the ways that best meet their needs. The platform features situation-based navigation so

that users who are not well-versed in code books can find the information they need for any given situation - even if the information resides in different codes. Users can bookmark and share code sections with team members. I believe FSAI members will find enormous value in LiNK.

**Q:** Kindly share how our readers can access various training programs being offered by NFPA on a regular basis (both classroom and virtual).

**R:** As the coronavirus gripped the world, we worked hard to help a broad range of stakeholders who were looking to learn about relevant code requirements for empty office buildings, emergency response, inspection testing and maintenance,

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mobile or temporary healthcare facilities, and other COVID-related considerations. We produced fact sheets, NFPA Journal content, blogs, videos, webinars, white papers, and podcasts. I am particularly proud of the way that our training and certification teams stepped up to meet the challenges of the times and to help remote workers learn. As you know,

*We don't simply react to tragedies, we get out in front of issues and as evidenced over the last year during a global pandemic, we embrace our leadership role and provide much-needed, timely perspective through a myriad of NFPA channels and resources'*

NFPA has a long, storied history of being a top provider of classroom training. Over the past five years, we have collaborated with FSAI to deliver fire protection training in India so that members are informed about key codes including NFPA 13 Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems, NFPA 20 Standard for the Installation of Stationary Pumps

for Fire Protection, and NFPA 72° National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code°. I also encourage FSAI members to visit our website and look at the full array of training offerings that we offer to help them in their career, because while we continue to collaborate with organizations seeking our group training, the global trend is online learning. We can help FSAI and their members with online learning modules, live virtual training, and certification learning paths. We also recently introduced digital badging so that FSAI members can share learning capabilities via social media and email signatures. All these educational tools were in the pipeline prior to the pandemic but our team accelerated things to help bridge the knowledge gap during unprecedented times. It is a prime example of NFPA's more nimble approach to providing stakeholders with relevant, real world resources.

**Q:** *FSAI is constantly championing equality, opportunities and activities for women including highly demanding industrial employment assignments such as fire safety. Our women chapter is also undertaking different training and awareness programs. In this regard what are the specific and exclusive NFPA training programs which are aimed for women?*

NFPA has women working at every level of the organization, including many accomplished female engineers who serve as codes and standards subject matter experts, researchers, and industry liaisons. All our training programs are intended for the full audience we serve.

In addition, we produce various research to support women in the fire service. For example, fire departments in the United States value the insights gleaned from our Needs Assessment for the U.S. Fire Service report. This report noted that nearly half the firehouses in the U.S. are close to 50 years of age and therefore not designed with separate facilities for women. The U.S. Fire Profile report, generated by our Applied Research team, shows

that females still make up less than 10 percent of the U.S. fire service, with approximately 100,000 female firefighters working in a volunteer or career capacity. This information helps to inform policy making, budgeting, and recruiting, while another report on the Patterns of Female Firefighter Injuries on the Fireground has helped with standard operating procedures. Currently, the Fire Protection Research Foundation, the research affiliate of NFPA, is looking at firefighter personal protective clothing for the female human form, taking into account design, comfort, and mobility issues.

**Q:** *Sir, by and large the public needs to be better motivated, inspired and even enforced upon to get duly trained on fire and life safety. They need to obtain and utilize safety knowledge in case fire or other mishaps occur and involve them or others in the vicinity.*

- *The expected response actions could be:*
  - *Initial firefighting*
  - *Rescue/ First-Aid/ Evacuation of affected personnel*
- *The locations could be:*
  - *Homes*
  - *Situations could be moving around/ along:*
    - *Roads*
    - *Shopping destinations*
    - *Traveling in vehicles or other modes of transport.*
    - *Being present at large gatherings / assembly/ congregation locations of different types.*
    - *While lodging in hotels or admitted to hospitals*
    - *Staying put at schools/ campuses etc.,*

**In all the above scenarios which are the types of codes, standards, training, or safety tips NFPA have formulated for the public domain? Please elaborate.**

**R:** Nearly three years ago, NFPA introduced the NFPA Fire & Life Safety Ecosystem™ to underscore that safety is a system and that we all have a role to play, including the public. It is incumbent upon us as individuals

and as organizations to educate people about safety and the important role that standards play in keeping average citizens, workers, and emergency responders free from harm in any environment. NFPA offers free online access to our codes and standards for that reason.

We produce and distribute public education materials that are used by fire departments, teachers, and community organizers to raise awareness of life safety threats, incident statistics and prevention tips. We developed NFPA 1300, *Standard on Community Risk Assessment and Community Risk Reduction Plan Development* in recent years to heighten awareness of community risk reduction as an important prevention process for fire departments and others. We are working right now with over 300 fire-service agencies in the U.S. as part of a pilot program to map areas of risk in communities by offering departments a custom dashboard that will help them keep track of and chart areas that have experienced fires and other types of emergencies. Using this information, public safety personnel can then take actions that will help reduce risk in communities that need it the most.

**Q:** *Kindly provide insights about hospital safety, highlighting where and when fire incidents could have been prevented, reduced, controlled, or mitigated. This may entail saving the lives of patients who are less mobile and motivating readers to learn about incidents across our country where short- and long-term action plans and execution might have produced better results.*

**R:** While the coronavirus has affected the healthcare industry in a way that modern society has not seen before, the idea of risk is not new to medical personnel, those who manage healthcare properties, or the patients and visitors who visit medical buildings. Fires can and do occur in the medical environment and given high occupancy rates, foot traffic, and the vulnerability of patients, hospital

fires can have a significant impact on a community.

In direct reference to your question related to Indian experience, In August'20, eight COVID-19 patients were killed in a fire in the ICU ward of a hospital in Ahmedabad.

Again within a span of three months, five more patients were killed when fire broke out in a COVID-19 ward in a Rajkot city hospital. That incident was the fourth in the state since the outbreak began and most likely due to an electrical short circuit.

In January'21, Ten new-born babies died in a massive fire at a hospital in Maharashtra. These are just a few examples of hospital fires in India; I also infer there had been few more such incidents in India. Hospital fires cause loss of life, property, equipment, essential supplies, and hospital records – and leave economic and business/care continuity challenges in their wake.

Safety is a system that should be taken very seriously - especially in hospitals where many occupants will be unable to evacuate on their own or without assistive equipment.

In 2016, the US Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) called for health care facilities to follow the 2012 editions of NFPA 101° *Life Safety Code* and NFPA 99 *Health Care Facilities Code* in order to meet the requirements of the Conditions of Participation (COP), as defined by CMS. Health care providers who participate in federal reimbursement programs are required to meet the COP expectations, and then in September of that year, CMS announced that its emergency preparedness rule would require a coordinated set of requirements to be established by various providers. As per the rule, hospitals, transplant centers, critical access hospitals and long-term care facilities must carefully evaluate their emergency and standby power systems. Specifically, they must

be inspected, tested, and maintained in accordance with the 2010 edition of NFPA 110 *Standard for Emergency and Standby Power Systems*, as well as the 2012 editions of both NFPA 99 and NFPA 101. These standards that pertain to healthcare facilities can be a tremendous resource around the globe.

**Q:** *What are the important checks and*

*“Fires can and do occur in the medical environment and given high occupancy rates, foot traffic, and the vulnerability of patients, hospital fires can have a significant impact on a community”*

*balances to prevent/reduce electrical power fire incidents that generate sparks and flames because of unsafe or poorly designed/maintained electrical systems, appliances, fittings and/or fixtures?*

**R:** There are so many opportunities for risk where electricity or power are concerned. The breadth of the

National Electrical Code\*(NEC) or NFPA 70 is vast, with eighteen distinct code-making panels developing the guidance that covers everything from everyday considerations such as outlets, lighting and electrical equipment to emerging issues such as energy storage

NFPA 70 is interrelated with other key information such as NFPA 70B *Recommended Practice for Electrical Equipment Maintenance* and NFPA 70E *Standard for Electrical Safety in the Workplace*, and by continuously building on industry knowledge via training and education.

In 1976, OSHA approached the NFPA Standards Council to form a committee charged with electrical safety requirements for employee workplaces. The goal was to establish a standard for electrical installations that would be compatible with OSHA requirements for employee safety in locations covered by the NEC. The result was NFPA 70E which consists of four major parts: Installation Safety Requirements; Safety-Related Work Practices; Safety-Related Maintenance Requirements; and Safety Requirements for Special Equipment.

Electrical injuries can be particularly debilitating, oftentimes involving complicated recoveries and lasting emotional and physical impact. That is why we are collaborating right now with the Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors on a Faces of Fire/Electrical campaign that features personal stories from people impacted by electrical incidents. I encourage FSAI members to check out that awareness initiative as well as the online training, live virtual training, and classroom programs that NFPA has for those who work with electrical components.

*Q: Serious fire incidents involving vast volumes of dried out grass, wild vegetation and trees are occurring in forest habitats intermittently and during specific seasons. What's NFPA's take on this serious issue given their global purview? In India also, we have great forest reserves. Besides our landscape is largely tropical and mostly hot all through the year.*

R: We just released a comprehensive wildfire policy strategy in the U.S. that will significantly reduce wildfire risk to communities, calls for policy

implementation at all levels of government, and ultimately seeks to end wildfire destruction by 2050. Outthink Wildfire™ is rooted in two realities – wildfires are going to happen, and the fire service will not be able to extinguish these fires at a pace to save people and property in their path. We propose five tenets that must be supported by all levels of government:

1. Require all homes and business in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) to be more resistant to ignition from wildfire embers and flames
2. Current codes and standards, as well as sound land use practices, must be appraised on among all stakeholders and enforced upon for new development and rebuilding in wildfire-prone areas
3. Fire departments for communities in the WUI must be prepared to respond safely and effectively to wildfire
4. Government must increase resources for vegetative fuel management
5. The public must understand its role and take corrective actions in reducing wildfire risk

While this is a US-based initiative, these tenets can be used in other places that are facing significant loss from wildfire.

*Q: In conclusion, do you have any additional as well as specific advice, message or counsel that would benefit our readers?*

R: I would encourage FSAI and its membership to use the NFPA Fire & Life Safety Ecosystem to facilitate discussions, revisit practices, and proactively work to protect people and property in India. As NFPA celebrates 125 years of championing safety this year, I can assure FSAI members that we will be doing the same on a global scale. Whether it is the work we do to safeguard the standards development process and produce the guidance you all need in your roles or our efforts to serve modern-day practitioners with

top notch resources and research, we are 100% committed to reducing risk throughout the world. There is too much at stake to do anything less.

*gratefully acknowledge NFPA's kind gesture of permitting us to share NFPA Journal contents on regular basis.*

world. We cannot do the work that we do without devoted professionals like FSAI Members. You are the face of safety in India and what you do matters. ■

R: Thank you for your time today – and for your interest in all that NFPA does to reduce risk in the

*Q. Before drawing the curtain, FSAI Journal administration would like to*

*Sir, Let us profusely and gratefully acknowledge your kind gesture of obliging us through this enlightening interview session. We appreciate, respect and accept the information as well as insights shared by you. We are optimistic that the beloved readers will benefit from all your points of view, thereby getting sensitized to take on higher/ more challenging responsibilities and facilitate their development as well as growth in whichever career they now pursue or wish to opt in later.*

*- KNK Murthy, Journal Executive Editor, FSAI*



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systems, microgrids, the Internet of Things, 5G, and Power over Ethernet. The complicated nature of electrical systems requires devoted professionals working with a solid framework. And that is not merely the NEC – which we know is not light reading. Optimal safety is achieved when

