

## **FAQ for Alternative Fire Extinguishing Systems COFs**

### **1. Why are these Certificates and changes occurring now?**

FC904 of the 2022 New York City Fire Code requiring a new Certificate of Fitness for all fire protection systems became effective on April 15, 2022. However, FC102.2.2 permits to operate without such a certificate for a period of 1 year from the effective date of the amendment to the code.

### **2. What is a Certificate of Fitness?**

The FDNY issues Certificates of Fitness (COF) to be responsible for supervision of the operation or facilities. for various types of dangerous occupations. We provide tests and/or qualification review processes to individual applicants to ensure they are familiar with the Fire Code and regulations governing the operation or the regulated material and to ensure the proper and safe performance of the duties as a COF holder.

### **3. What are the COF types for alternate agent Fire Extinguishing Systems?**

Wet Chemical Fire Extinguishing Systems: Principal: S-71 COF; Technicians: S-17 COF  
Dry Chemical Fire Extinguishing Systems: Principal: S-81 COF; Technicians: S-18 COF  
Gaseous Type Fire Extinguishing Systems: Principal: S-61 COF; Technicians: S-16 COF

### **4. How to apply the COFs?**

Visit the FDNY website and find the study material of the COF. The study material provides application information, list of required materials, and critical information for the applicants to apply the COF and/or to prepare for the exam.

<https://www.nyc.gov/site/fdny/business/all-certifications/certificates-of-fitness.page>

### **5. Are these COFs renewable? And when must I renew it?**

These COF cards must be renewed every 3 years.

### **6. As a technician, can I change my company?**

You can change company, but a new company letter must be submitted. The principal of the new company must hold a valid principal COF.

## **Principal's COF related issues**

### **7. How can principals apply COF?**

All principals must be DOB Master Fire Suppression Contractor (MFSPC) Type A or C license holders.

(1) To apply Wet and Dry Chemical Fire Extinguishing System principal COFs (S-81 and S-71):

In addition to the DOB Master Fire Suppression Contractor (MFSPC) (A or C) license, every principal must provide documents showing that at least one representative

has received the manufacturer's training for each system maintained/installed by the company. Such manufacturer's training certificate has to be issued for MFSPC company name.

The FDNY will use the manufacturers' training certificates submitted by each principal to create a list of companies with the names of specific manufacturers these companies are allowed to install and maintain.

(2) To apply Gaseous Fire Extinguishing System principal COF (S-61):

Only DOB Master Fire Suppression Contractor (A or C) license is required since gaseous fire extinguishing systems are engineered systems.

**8. When can principals start to apply COFs? Will the principals need to pass an exam to obtain the principal COF?**

02/28/23

On or after **02/28/23**, the S71, S81 and S61 COFs will be available on FDNY Business online application. No exam is required. The principal COFs are issued based on the criteria listed above via the Alternate Issuance Procedure (AIP).

All application materials and payments will be required to submit online.

Please obtain the required AIP forms on the FDNY COF website.

**9. When will the company list be established and provided to the public?**

04/04/2023

After the FDNY receives and approves the S71, S81 and S61 applications, the FDNY will establish three company lists for three types of alternate agent fire extinguishing systems and publish them on the FDNY website for the public on **04/04/2023**. The lists will be updated every month.

Wet Chemical Fire Extinguishing List (S71):

<http://www.nyc.gov/assets/fdny/downloads/pdf/business/approved-wet-chemical-systems-list.pdf>

Dry Chemical Fire Extinguishing List (S81):

<http://www.nyc.gov/assets/fdny/downloads/pdf/business/approved-dry-chemical-systems-list.pdf>

Gaseous Fire Extinguishing List (S61)

<http://www.nyc.gov/assets/fdny/downloads/pdf/business/approved-gaseous-systems-list.pdf>

**10. When will the FDNY start to enforce all principals to have COFs?**

07/01/2023

The FDNY will start to enforce all companies' principals who install or maintain any alternate agent fire extinguishing systems must hold a valid COF. For wet chemical and

dry chemical systems, the FDNY will only allow the companies to install or maintain the manufacturers that listed on the company lists.

**11. What happen if principals do not obtain their COFs by 07/01/2023?**

The FDNY personnel will use the FDNY-approved list to determine whether a company can file design and installation documents with Fire Department and/or is authorized to install or service systems from a specific manufacturer. If a company is not listed as approved for the installation and service of the particular manufacturer, then appropriate enforcement actions will be taken.

**12. How can active projects be completed after 07/01/2023 by a contractor not listed on the FDNY-approved list for the specific manufacturer?**

Effective 07/01/2023, each contractor will be limited to work only with the specific manufacturer's fire extinguishing systems listed in the FDNY-approved list.

However, the Department anticipates that contractors may choose to work only with fire extinguishing systems from selective manufacturers while having active projects for which the design and installation documents have been prepared and/or submitted to the Fire Department.

As a part of the transition phase, a contractor holding S61, S71 or S81 COF will be authorized to complete all active projects by trained and knowledgeable personnel for which initial design and installation documents have been submitted to the Fire Department before 07/01/2023, regardless of whether such contractor is listed or not on the FDNY-approved list for the specific manufacturer. The Department may create additional operational procedures to accomplish this process.

**Wet Chemical technician's COF related issues**

**13. How can wet chemical fire extinguishing systems technicians apply COF?**

The technicians must present a company letter and pass an COF exam.

(1) Company letter:

The letter must be on letterhead and signed by the principal holding principal COF.

The letter must state that effective 07/01/2023, the technician will be assigned jobs related to the installation or tests witnessed by the Fire Department only for systems for which the technician holds a **valid** training certificate from the

manufacturer. Such manufacturer's training certificate has to be issued to the technician and under the MFSPC company name.

The letter must state that effective 10/01/2023, the technician will be assigned jobs related to the maintenance or service of systems for which the technician received proper training (manufacturer's training or company internal training).

Sample recommendation letter can be obtained via the link below:

<http://www.nyc.gov/assets/fdny/downloads/pdf/business/s17-sample-letter.pdf>

(2) COF exam:

Technicians for Wet chemical Fire Extinguishing System need to pass S-17 COF exam.

<http://www.nyc.gov/assets/fdny/downloads/pdf/business/cof-s17-noe-study-materials.pdf>

**14. When can wet chemical fire extinguishing systems technicians start to apply COF?**

02/28/2023

The S-17 exam will be available to the public on or after 02/28/23.

**15. When will the FDNY start to enforce all technicians performing installation and testing on wet chemical fire extinguishing systems to have COFs?**

07/01/2023.

These technicians must also hold a **valid** training certificate from the manufacturer for the specific system(s) that will be installing or testing on or after 07/01/2023.

Effective 07/01/2023, the FDNY inspector will be verifying presence of a valid manufacturer's training certification and COF before any tests.

**16. How will FDNY verify that the installation of the wet chemical fire extinguishing systems on or after 07/01/2023 was conducted by a COF holder??**

For any wet chemical fire extinguishing system which the initial Project Authorization issued on or after 07/01/2023, as a part of the public request for any tests witnessed by the FDNY, the contractor will be required to submit

- Copy of S-17 COF for the technician who will perform the installation/testing, AND
- Copy of the valid manufacturer's training certificate issued to the technician who will perform the installation/testing.

**17. When will the FDNY start to enforce all technicians performing maintenance on wet chemical fire extinguishing systems to have COFs?**

10/01/2023.

Effective 10/01/2023, the service tag for a semi-annual inspection of a wet chemical fire extinguishing system must also include the information related to the COF holder who conducted the inspection, as required by FC904.5.2(10). The FDNY Rangehood Unit inspectors will verify if the system's inspection and/or maintenance was conducted by a person holding valid COF and may request proof for proper training of such COF holders. The FDNY may require all technicians to hold a valid manufacturer training certificate for each system serviced in 2025.

**18. What actions will be taken by the FDNY if determined that maintenance or service of a wet chemical fire extinguishing system was conducted by a person without a valid COF on or after 10/01/2023?**

Appropriate enforcement actions will be taken for failure to comply with Section FC901.6.3(1).

**Dry Chemical and Gaseous technician's COF related issues**

**19. How will dry chemical and gaseous type fire extinguishing systems technicians apply COF?**

The S18 (dry chemical) and S16 (gaseous) exams are still under development. The procedure will be released when the exams are ready.

**Other General Questions**

**20. Why are there different enforcement deadlines to enforce the COF requirements for the technicians who perform installation and the technician who perform maintenance?**

Installation and service of a pre-engineered wet chemical fire extinguishing system shall be conducted by an individual who attended a training program run by the manufacturer for each specific system.

Fire Department recognizes that it may take time for all individuals responsible for installing, recharging, and maintaining the systems to undergo manufacturer training for each system that a company works with, while a large number of approved fire extinguishing systems needs to be properly maintained across New York City.

The installation of a system is more complicated than its maintenance. It involves many complex and interrelated tasks requiring an individual to have more profound knowledge and ability to navigate through the installation manual. Effective 07/01/2023, the installation and tests requiring an FDNY representative's presence will be conducted by a COF holder holding a valid training certificate from a manufacturer.

In contrast, the maintenance of a pre-engineered wet chemical fire extinguishing system is typically simpler and involves tasks specific to each manufacturer; however, overall, similar across all manufacturers.

It's important to note that regular maintenance by a trained and knowledgeable person is essential to ensure that the fire suppression system is always ready to operate when needed.

**21. Why is the FDNY requiring manufacturer's training in addition to having a COF for pre-engineering fire extinguishing systems (wet chemical and dry chemical)?**

The COF study materials and the exams will only focus on the general basic requirements of Fire Code and applicable NFPA.

The pre-engineering fire extinguishing systems made by different manufacturers are usually not identical in all characteristics and each manufacturer designs equipment for use with a specific chemical. Therefore, it is critical that the applicants are thoroughly trained and be familiar with the latest manufacturer's manual before they serve any pre-engineering fire extinguishing system.

**22. Can the technicians take the exams before he/she receives all required manufacturer's or company internal trainings?**

Yes. However, the company letter must be submitted stating that the technician will be assigned work for the installation and/or maintenance of the systems for which appropriate training was received.

**23. What should the principal do if any technician leaves his/her company?**

The principal must email the COF unit at [pubcert@fdny.nyc.gov](mailto:pubcert@fdny.nyc.gov) to update this change.

**24. Are the requirements related to the qualification of technicians responsible for the installation and/or maintenance of alternative agent fire extinguishing systems similar in other jurisdictions?**

Yes. Similar requirements have been in effect in Nassau County.

**25. Why are these changes taking place?**

The overall Department's goal is to improve public and first responders' safety by eliminating the extent of fires beyond the hazard areas protected by properly installed and maintained alternative agent fire extinguishing systems.