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MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 26, 2020

TO: Fire Protection Contractors

FROM: James G. Smith, State Fire Marshal 

SUBJECT: COVID-19 – Essential Fire Protection

On Wednesday, March 25, 2020, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz issued Executive Order 20-20 directing Minnesotans to “Stay at Home”. The Executive Order allows for exemptions for workers in “critical sectors”. Exemption 6-x deals with construction and critical trades who provide services that are necessary for safety.

It is the position of the Minnesota State Fire Marshal that certain facets of the fire protection industry are critical to ensuring the safety of buildings and the building’s occupants. These functions are congruent with the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce outlined in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce (issued March 23, 2020).

Based on the above, it is the position of the Minnesota State Fire Marshal that fire protection systems play an important role in saving lives and reducing fire loss in buildings. Such roles are extremely critical as more people are compelled to stay at home since residential fires represent 76% of all building fires and 75% of all fire deaths in Minnesota.

Persons performing the following types of fire protection-related work are deemed to be critical pursuant to this executive order:

- Persons who install, design, inspect, repair or maintain fire sprinkler systems
- Persons who install, design, inspect, repair or maintain fire alarm systems
- Persons who monitor fire and similar hazardous condition alarms and dispatch emergency response personnel
- Persons whose job is necessary to support the above types of tasks or functions

Please feel free to contact our fire code staff at fire.code@state.mn.us with any questions.