

FOUR HIGH STORAGE OF RELIEVING-STYLE STEEL DRUMS APPROVED

NFPA Approves Amendment to Flammable and Combustible Liquids Code

May 17, 2000 – The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), at its annual meeting in Denver, Colorado May 14-17, 2000, approved an amendment to NFPA 30, the flammable and combustible liquids code. This code change allows steel drums filled with flammable and combustible liquids which are fitted with relieving style plugs to be stacked four high in storage warehouses with foam-water fire suppression systems.

This decision doubles warehouse storage space while safely managing the fire hazards associated with the storage of hazardous materials. The Steel Shipping Container Institute (SSCI) is extremely pleased with this cost saving measure taken by the NFPA. The NFPA Code is used by many state and local fire code authorities to establish storage requirements for warehouse storage of hazardous materials.

The NFPA 30 Committee considered and approved this change in the Code after an extensive review of the results of comprehensive fire tests conducted at the Southwest Research Institute, a non-profit engineering research and testing facility. The tests showed that relieving style steel containers could be safely stacked up to four high, effectively doubling warehouse space, safely managing risk due to fire loss and improving storage efficiencies. NFPA will publish a new Fire Code incorporating these changes in late summer/early fall of this year.

SSCI in partnership with the American Iron and Steel Institute, the National Paint and Coatings Association, insurers, chemical companies, fire protection equipment suppliers, drum manufacturers, and closure manufacturers, sponsored the \$360,000 fire tests. David Nugent, Vice President-Loss Control, Schirmer Engineering Corporation was the Technical Advisor on the project.

The NFPA Code presently allows two-high storage of steel drums with relieving plugs and fire suppression systems. The next step is to work with local and state fire code officials to assure that the amendment to the NFPA Code allowing four-high steel drum storage is incorporated in community codes nationwide.

For more information on the NFPA Code change or for information on the fire tests at Southwest Research Institute please contact Dennis Freezer, Technical Director of SSCI at 202 408-1900 or by e-mail at freezer@steelcontainers.com. A free video on the fire test is available as well.