



## Inspection Techniques: What's wrong with this picture?

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**Learning Objective:** The student shall be able to identify conditions affecting the location of fire department connections.

One of the fire sprinkler industry's trade journals has a monthly feature called "What's Wrong with This Picture?" where readers are invited to comment on obvious and not-so-obvious errors in fire protection system installations.

So, what's wrong with this picture?

From a code perspective, nothing, but it's a good opportunity to discuss placement of fire department connections for sprinklers, standpipes, and other water-based fire protection systems that may need pressure and volume supplemented by the fire department.



Hoses connected to this fire department connection could block traffic through this pair of doors.

Fire department connections (FDC) should be visible and accessible at all times. This installation is adjacent to a fire apparatus access road so it is convenient to the engine and nearby fire hydrants. One of the model fire codes requires that FDC be located "on the street side of buildings, fully visible and recognizable from the street or nearest point of fire department vehicle access or as otherwise approved by the fire code official."

NFPA<sup>®</sup> 13, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems*, says connections shall be "on the street side of buildings and shall be located and arranged so that hose lines can be readily and conveniently attached to the inlets without interference from any nearby objects, including buildings, fences, posts, or other fire department connections. The location shall be based on the requirements of the fire department."

This FDC also has been color-coded using this community's marking scheme that colors fire department connections to standpipe systems in yellow, sprinkler systems in green, and combined sprinkler/standpipe systems in red. This color-coding gives the Incident Commander (IC) or Company Officer (CO) a quick reference to select the correct FDC when more than one exists.

So what might be "wrong" with this picture? Look closely at the FDC position in relation to the doors to the right. Charged fire hoses 2- 1/2-inch (63.5 mm) or larger connected to the right-hand side of this FDC would block the doors, making them unusable for emergency egress or even access in to the building firefighting operations. While technically not a violation of the codes or standards, this installation might affect safety and tactics. Code officials should pay close attention to these potential conflicts when approving the location of FDC.

