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**BULLETIN: WATER FLOW TESTS FOR FIRE SYSTEMS**

Division of the State Architect (DSA) documents referenced within this publication are available on the [DSA Publications](#) webpage.

**PURPOSE:** In response to the 2014 drought state of emergency, this bulletin clarifies that there are alternates to water flow tests and that when alternates are not available older water flow test data may be used.

**BACKGROUND:** The design of fire protection systems such as fire hydrants and automatic fire sprinkler systems requires certain information about water pressures and flow rates that is usually obtained by water flow tests. These tests result in water usage that is not reclaimed. Historically, DSA has required the water flow tests be no older than six months at time of project submittal. Section 23.2.1.1 of NFPA 13 requires the test to be conducted no more than 12 months from the time of submittal and also allows the authority having jurisdiction to exercise discretion when determining how current the water flow test data must be. In addition, current codes and standards accept and encourage alternate means of determining or obtaining water flow data.

**DECLARATION:**

1. In lieu of water flow tests, DSA currently accepts and will continue to accept one of the following:
  - A letter signed by the local fire authority certifying the available flows and pressures.
  - A computer model analysis by the applicable water agency (or licensed civil or fire protection engineer) that determines the available flows and pressures. This analysis shall be performed using knowledge of the flows and pressures in the system, taking into account the future expected growth and demand of the community.
2. DSA will accept water flow tests for the purposes of determining building fire suppression capability, design of fire hydrant systems or automatic fire sprinkler systems, conducted up to 12 months prior to the date a project is submitted.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

- 2013, 2016 California Building and Fire Codes
- 2013, 2016 NFPA 13
- 2013, 2016 NFPA 24
- DSA Project Submittal Guideline: *GL-1: Automatic Fire Sprinkler Systems*