

Stationary Fire Pumps and Standpipe Systems Handbook

Sixth Edition

Edited by

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With the complete text of the following:

2019 edition of NFPA® 20, *Standard for the Installation of Stationary Pumps for Fire Protection*

2016 edition of NFPA® 14, *Standard for the Installation of Standpipe and Hose Systems*

2019 edition of NFPA® 291, *Recommended Practice for Fire Flow Testing and Marking of Hydrants*

2019 edition of NFPA® 24, *Standard for the Installation of Private Fire Service Mains and Their Appurtenances*



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The found term will be highlighted in the text. To go to other occurrences of the term, use the previous and next buttons that appear beside the Find box.

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Links to other sections of the document are colored red. When you click on a link and are directed to another page, use the following keyboard shortcut to return to the original page: ALT + <left arrow> for PC; COMMAND + <left arrow> for Mac.

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CALCULATION EXAMPLE

A fire pump rated for 1500 gpm (5677 L/min) and 100 psi (6.9 bar) at 1750 rpm has a shutoff pressure of 120 psi (8.3 bar). The shutoff pressure produces 145 psi (10 bar) at 110 percent of rated speed. If a maximum of 45 psi (3.1 bar) static pressure is available from the city water supply, the total pressure when the pump is running at churn at 110 percent of rated speed is 190 psi (13.1 bar).

Pressure increase at 110 percent of rated speed = $110\% \times 121\%$

$$120 \text{ psi (8.3 bar)} \times 1.21 = 145 \text{ psi (10 bar)}$$

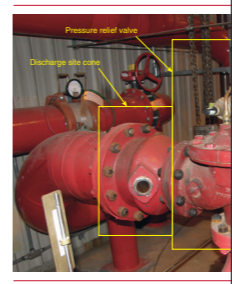
$$145 \text{ psi} + 45 \text{ psi (10 bar)} + 3.1 \text{ bar} = 190 \text{ psi (13.1 bar)}$$

In this case, a pressure relief valve (see Exhibit L4.27) is needed if the fire protection system components are rated at 175 psi (12.1 bar). A pressure relief valve is not required if the fire protection system components are rated for 200 psi (13.8 bar) or higher.

Calculation Examples illustrate important equations and formulas.

Prior to the 1996 edition, NFPA 20 required the installation of pressure relief valves for all diesel engine fire pumps. This requirement was based on the assumption that, if engines ran too fast (a condition known as overspeed), the fire protection system would be exposed to pressures in excess of the pressure ratings of the system components. Because of 11.2.4.4.1, the technical committee believes that a pressure relief valve is not required for pump installations.

EXHIBIT L4.27 Pressure Relief Valve with Waste Cone. (Courtesy of JENSEN HUGHES, Inc.)



4.20.1.1.3 Where an electric variable speed pump is installed, and the maximum total discharge head at shutoff and rated speed exceeds the pressure rating of the system components, a pressure relief valve shall be installed.

- 8.6.2.3** Bearings shall be in accordance with AGMA standards and applied for an L10 life of 15,000 hours.
 - 8.6.2.4** For drive systems that include a gear case, the pump manufacturer shall provide a complete mass elastic system torsional analysis to ensure there are no damaging stresses or critical speeds within 25 percent above and below the operating speed of the pump(s) and driver.
 - 8.6.2.4.1** For variable speed drives, the analysis of 8.6.2.4 shall include all speeds down to 25 percent below the lowest operating speed obtainable with the variable speed drive.
 - 8.6.3 Common Drivers.**
 - 8.6.3.1** A single driver shall be permitted to drive more than one positive displacement pump.
- Paragraph 8.6.3.1 overrides the requirement in 4.7.4 and permits one motor/engine to drive multiple pumps. The flow demands of a water mist fire protection system, combined with the low operating flow range of a positive displacement pump, commonly require that more than one pump be driven off the same motor/engine driver. Manufacturers typically supply this arrangement in a pre-assembled unit.

CLOSER LOOK

Torsional Vibration

Torsional vibration is the angular speed fluctuation of a rotating power train system. The fluctuations are in response to torque pulsation from the driver, such as a diesel engine, or the load, such as a positive displacement piston pump. Driveline components have inertia (mass) and store energy like a spring when they twist (like elastic). When these components are assembled into a driveline system, a unique "mass elastic system" is created that has unique resonant behavior. Resonance is also referred to as natural frequency.

Think of resonant response as that of a tuning fork or wine glass to a vibration input. These simple examples have a unique natural frequency which, when excited by a forcing function at that same frequency, will generate high levels of vibration response. This can lead to damage or failure, such as the shattering of the wine glass. The driveline will exhibit similar resonant behavior and must be carefully designed so that frequency of the torque pulsations produced by the driver do not excite any of the natural frequencies of the system when operating at any normal operating speed. The rotational speed at which the pulsation frequency coincides with a natural frequency is referred to as a critical speed. Damage or failure to the driveline may result if the system is operating too close to a critical speed.

"A complete mass elastic system torsional analysis" is an analytical computation that predicts the dynamic response of a rotating power train system; it predicts critical speeds. Often referred to as Torsional Vibration Analysis (TVA), it is exclusively concerned with the rotating degree of freedom and torsional vibrations felt by the hand or shaft whiplash that may be present. This analysis allows the designer to avoid designing a driveline that will run near a critical speed. The analysis typically comprises lumped inertias connected by torsional elements. The data required to assemble the model is obtained from component manufacturers. The data required to assemble the model is obtained from component manufacturers. The data required to assemble the model is obtained from component manufacturers. The data required to assemble the model is obtained from component manufacturers.

Closer Look features provide further information on selected topics from the standards.

10.4 Components.

10.4.1* Voltage Surge Arrester.

A.10.4.1 Operation of the surge arrester should not cause either the isolating switch or the circuit breaker to open. Arresters in ANSI/IEEE C62.11, *IEEE Standard for Metal-Oxide Surge Arresters for Alternating Current Power Circuits (>1 kV)*, are normally zinc-oxide without gaps.

The "gaps" referred to in **A.10.4.1** are common when using the silicon-carbide (Si-C) types of surge arresters referred to in **10.4.1.1**. A surge voltage of sufficient magnitude arcs across the gap and the Si-C semiconductor element absorbs the surge energy. Once the voltage decays sufficiently or at the next zero crossing of the current, the arc extinguishes and prevents any further leakage or follow-on current. This allows the Si-C element to cool down and be ready for the next surge, spike, or transient event.

10.4.1.1 Unless the requirements of **10.4.1.3** or **10.4.1.4** are met, a voltage surge arrester complying with ANSI/IEEE C62.11, *IEEE Standard for Gapped Silicon-Carbide Surge Arresters for AC Power Circuits*, or ANSI/IEEE C62.11, *IEEE Standard for Metal-Oxide Surge Arresters for Alternating Current Power Circuits (>1 kV)*, shall be installed from each phase to ground. (See **10.3.3.3**.)

Surge arresters are provided in controllers to prevent power line surges from damaging components in the controller and/or rendering them inoperable. Typical failures due to a power line surge are burnouts of indicating lamps and dielectric breakdowns of the magnetic contactor holding coil.

10.4.1.2 The surge arrester shall be rated to suppress voltage surges above line voltage.

Even when the surge arrester is rated above line voltage as required by this section, there will be some amount of increase of the voltage during a surge; no arrester can perfectly clamp excess voltage. However, properly rated devices should limit damage to the equipment. Some controller designs have a high "voltage withstand" capability to provide the most reliability against surges.

Mandatory text and nonmandatory annex text from the standards are printed in black with shading to indicate where text has changed from the previous edition of the standard.

Commentary text, which is printed in black and shaded in yellow, is intended to assist users in understanding and applying NFPA 20 and NFPA 14.

valve is required by the standard to be installed when the diesel engine is turning faster than normal, and since this is a relatively rare event, it is permitted for the discharge from the pressure relief valve to be piped back to the suction side of the pump.

FAQ

Does NFPA 20 permit the installation of main pressure relief valves in electric fire pump systems? No section in this standard specifically permits the use of a main pressure relief valve on an electric fire pump, except where a variable speed driver is used. Variable speed drivers are required to default to constant rated speed operation in the event the variable speed driver fails. If operating at constant rated speed can result in system overpressurization, a pressure relief valve is required. The pressure relief valve setting must be above the set pressure of the variable speed driver.

4.20.1.1* Pressure relief valves shall be used only where specifically permitted by this standard.

The use of a main pressure relief valve to trim excess pressure is considered to be poor design and should be avoided. Several methods are available to cope with excessive pressures, such as the following:

1. A break tank.
2. A variable speed pressure-limiting control device (see **11.2.4.3**).
3. Other pressure-regulating devices downstream of the fire pump discharge control valve.

ASK THE AHJ

The plans for a diesel engine-driven centrifugal pump do not show the installation of a pressure relief valve. Is this omission permitted?

ANSWER: Yes, this is acceptable in some installations. The pressure relief valve requirement on diesel engine-driven pumps is intended to prevent the piping from overpressurization if the fire pump malfunctions and runs at a higher speed than anticipated. If 121 percent of the pump's churn pressure is added to the maximum static pressure of the water supply, and the total does not exceed the maximum working pressure of the system components, a pressure relief valve is not required.

A.4.20.1.1 In situations where the required system pressure is close to the pressure rating of the system components and the water supply pressure varies significantly over time, to eliminate system overpressurization, it might be necessary to use one of the following:

- (1) A tank between the water supply and the pump station, in lieu of directly connecting to the water supply piping.
- (2) A variable speed pressure-limiting control device.

4.20.1.2 Where a diesel engine fire pump is installed and where a total of 121 percent of the net rated shutoff (churn) pressure plus the maximum static suction pressure, adjusted for elevation, exceeds the pressure for which the system components are rated, a pressure relief valve shall be installed.

Pumps that create pressures less than the pressure rating of the fire protection system components (typically 175 psi (12.1 bar)) at 110 percent of rated speed do not need a pressure relief valve. The sample calculation that follows illustrates the procedure used to determine if a pressure relief valve is needed.

Frequently asked questions (FAQs) are based on the most commonly asked questions of the NFPA 20 and NFPA 14 staff.

Ask the AHJ questions offer snapshots of typical situations faced by authorities having jurisdiction.

Interactive PDF versions of the forms featured in Part IV, Supplement 3 are also available as "eForms" at nfpa.org/20.



EXHIBIT L4.7 Check Valve Listed for 200 psi (13.8 bar). (Courtesy of JENSEN HUGHES, Inc.)

4.7.2* Pressure relief valves and pressure-regulating devices in the fire pump installation shall not be used as a means to meet the requirements of 4.7.1.1.

The use of pressure relief valves is limited in this standard to the following situations:

- Constant speed diesel engine drivers where pressures developed can exceed the pressure rating of system components if a 10 percent overspeed condition occurs.
- Variable speed drivers where pressures developed can exceed the pressure rating of system components if a failure causes the driver to revert to rated speed.

A pump should never be deliberately oversized so that a pressure-regulating device is needed. Pressure relief valves are maintenance intensive and should be incorporated into the design of a fire pump system only when necessary and allowed by this standard. Pressure-reducing valves are not permitted to be installed in the fire pump system piping. Where pump discharge pressures exceed 175 psi (12.1 bar), flanged cast-iron valves and fittings between the fire pump discharge flange and the discharge isolation valve must be of extra heavy pattern. It is not the intent of 4.7.2 to limit the use of pressure-reducing valves or pressure-regulating valves downstream of the discharge isolation valve. The use of pressure-regulating valves downstream of the discharge isolation valve is covered in other standards. In many cases, high-pressure output is needed to meet the design requirements of systems installed in high-rise buildings and in standpipe systems in particular.

A.4.7.2 It is not the intent of this subsection to restrict the use of pressure-reducing valves downstream of the discharge isolation valve for the purpose of meeting the requirements of 4.7.1.

4.7.3 Variable Speed Pump.

4.7.3.1 Variable speed pumps, as defined in this standard, shall be acceptable to limit system pressure.

Variable speed pumps control system pressure by changing the pump speed to prevent overpressurization of the fire protection system. Using a variable speed pump can eliminate the need to use pressure-regulating devices, such as pressure-reducing valves, in some system designs. A variable speed pump can be used when high flow and high pressure are needed but, due to the nature of fire pump

SEE MORE

For more information on pressure control, see the feature Controlling Excess Fire Pump Pressures at the end of this chapter.

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A fire pump rated for 1500 gpm (5677 L/min) and 100 psi (6.9 bar) at 1750 rpm has a shutoff pressure of 120 psi (8.3 bar). The shutoff pressure produces 145 psi (10 bar) at 110 percent of rated speed. If a maximum of 45 psi (3.1 bar) static pressure is available from the city water supply, the total pressure when the pump is running at churn at 110 percent of rated speed is 190 psi (13.1 bar).

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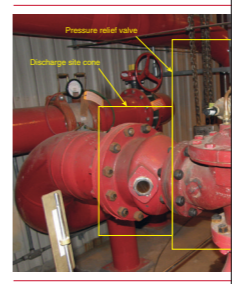
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$$145 \text{ psi} + 45 \text{ psi (10 bar} + 3.1 \text{ bar)} = 190 \text{ psi (13.1 bar)}$$

In this case, a pressure relief valve (see Exhibit L4.27) is needed if the fire protection system components are rated at 175 psi (12.1 bar). A pressure relief valve is not required if the fire protection system components are rated for 200 psi (13.8 bar) or higher.

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4.20.1.3 Where an electric variable speed pump is installed, and the maximum total discharge head at shutoff and rated speed exceeds the pressure rating of the system components, a pressure relief valve shall be installed.

- 8.6.2.3** Bearings shall be in accordance with AGMA standards and applied for an L10 life of 15,000 hours.
 - 8.6.2.4** For drive systems that include a gear case, the pump manufacturer shall provide a complete mass elastic system torsional analysis to ensure there are no damaging stresses or critical speeds within 25 percent above and below the operating speed of the pump(s) and driver.
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Torsional Vibration

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"A complete mass elastic system torsional analysis" is an analytical computation that predicts the dynamic response of a rotating power train system; it predicts critical speeds. Often referred to as a TV analysis (TV), it is exclusively concerned with the rotating degree of freedom and torsional vibration (vibrations felt by the hand) or shaft whiplash that may be present. This analysis allows the designer to avoid designing a driveline that will run near a critical speed. The TV analysis model typically comprises lumped inertias connected by torsional elements. The data required to assemble the model is obtained from component manufacturers. The data required to assemble the model is obtained from component manufacturers. The data required to assemble the model is obtained from component manufacturers. The data required to assemble the model is obtained from component manufacturers.

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- The "gaps" referred to in A.10.4.1 are common when using the silicon-carbide (Si-C) types of surge arresters referred to in 10.4.1.1. A surge voltage of sufficient magnitude arcs across the gap and the Si-C semiconductor element absorbs the surge energy. Once the voltage decays sufficiently or at the next zero crossing of the current, the arc extinguishes and prevents any further leakage or follow-on current. This allows the Si-C element to cool down and be ready for the next surge, spike, or transient event.
- 10.4.1.1** Unless the requirements of 10.4.1.3 or 10.4.1.4 are met, a voltage surge arrester complying with ANSI/IEEE C62.11, *IEEE Standard for Gapped Silicon-Carbide Surge Arresters for AC Power Circuits*, or ANSI/IEEE C62.11, *IEEE Standard for Metal-Oxide Surge Arresters for Alternating Current Power Circuits (>1 kV)*, shall be installed from each phase to ground. (See 10.3.3.3.)
- Surge arresters are provided in controllers to prevent power line surges from damaging components in the controller and/or rendering them inoperable. Typical failures due to a power line surge are burnouts of indicating lamps and dielectric breakdowns of the magnetic contactor holding coil.
- 10.4.1.2** The surge arrester shall be rated to suppress voltage surges above line voltage.
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valve is required by the standard to be installed when the diesel engine is turning faster than normal, and since this is a relatively rare event, it is permitted for the discharge from the pressure relief valve to be piped back to the suction side of the pump.

FAQ

Does NFPA 20 permit the installation of main pressure relief valves in electric fire pump systems?

No section in this standard specifically permits the use of a main pressure relief valve on an electric fire pump, except where a variable speed driver is used. Variable speed drivers are required to default to constant rated speed operation in the event the variable speed driver fails. If operating at constant rated speed can result in system overpressurization, a pressure relief valve is required. The pressure relief valve setting must be above the set pressure of the variable speed driver.

4.20.1.1* Pressure relief valves shall be used only where specifically permitted by this standard.

- The use of a main pressure relief valve to trim excess pressure is considered to be poor design and should be avoided. Several methods are available to cope with excessive pressures, such as the following:
 1. A break tank.
 2. A variable speed pressure-limiting control device (see 11.2.4.3).
 3. Other pressure-regulating devices downstream of the fire pump discharge control valve.

ASK THE AHJ

The plans for a diesel engine-driven centrifugal pump do not show the installation of a pressure relief valve. Is this omission permitted?

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A.4.20.1.1 In situations where the required system pressure is close to the pressure rating of the system components and the water supply pressure varies significantly over time, to eliminate system overpressurization, it might be necessary to use one of the following:

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4.20.1.2 Where a diesel engine fire pump is installed and where a total of 121 percent of the net rated shutoff (churn) pressure plus the maximum static suction pressure, adjusted for elevation, exceeds the pressure for which the system components are rated, a pressure relief valve shall be installed.

Pumps that create pressures less than the pressure rating of the fire protection system components (typically 175 psi (12.1 bar)) at 110 percent of rated speed do not need a pressure relief valve. The sample calculation that follows illustrates the procedure used to determine if a pressure relief valve is needed.

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EXHIBIT L4.7 Check Valve Listed for 200 psi (13.8 bar). (Courtesy of JENSEN HUGHES, Inc.)

4.7.2* Pressure relief valves and pressure-regulating devices in the fire pump installation shall not be used as a means to meet the requirements of 4.7.1.1.

- The use of pressure relief valves is limited in this standard to the following situations:
 - Constant speed diesel engine drivers where pressures developed can exceed the pressure rating of system components if a 10 percent overspeed condition occurs.
 - Variable speed drivers where pressures developed can exceed the pressure rating of system components if a failure causes the driver to revert to rated speed.

A pump should never be deliberately oversized so that a pressure-regulating device is needed. Pressure relief valves are maintenance intensive and should be incorporated into the design of a fire pump system only when necessary and allowed by this standard. Pressure-reducing valves are not permitted to be installed in the fire pump system piping. Where pump discharge pressures exceed 175 psi (12.1 bar), flanged cast-iron valves and fittings between the fire pump discharge flange and the discharge isolation valve must be of extra heavy pattern. It is not the intent of 4.7.2 to limit the use of pressure-reducing valves or pressure-regulating valves downstream of the discharge isolation valve. The use of pressure-regulating valves downstream of the discharge isolation valve is covered in other standards. In many cases, high-pressure output is needed to meet the design requirements of systems installed in high-rise buildings and in standpipe systems in particular.

A.4.7.2 It is not the intent of this subsection to restrict the use of pressure-reducing valves downstream of the discharge isolation valve for the purpose of meeting the requirements of 4.7.1.

4.7.3 Variable Speed Pump.

4.7.3.1 Variable speed pumps, as defined in this standard, shall be acceptable to limit system pressure.

Variable speed pumps control system pressure by changing the pump speed to prevent overpressurization of the fire protection system. Using a variable speed pump can eliminate the need to use pressure-regulating devices, such as pressure-reducing valves, in some system designs. A variable speed pump can be used when high flow and high pressure are needed but, due to the nature of fire pump

SEE MORE

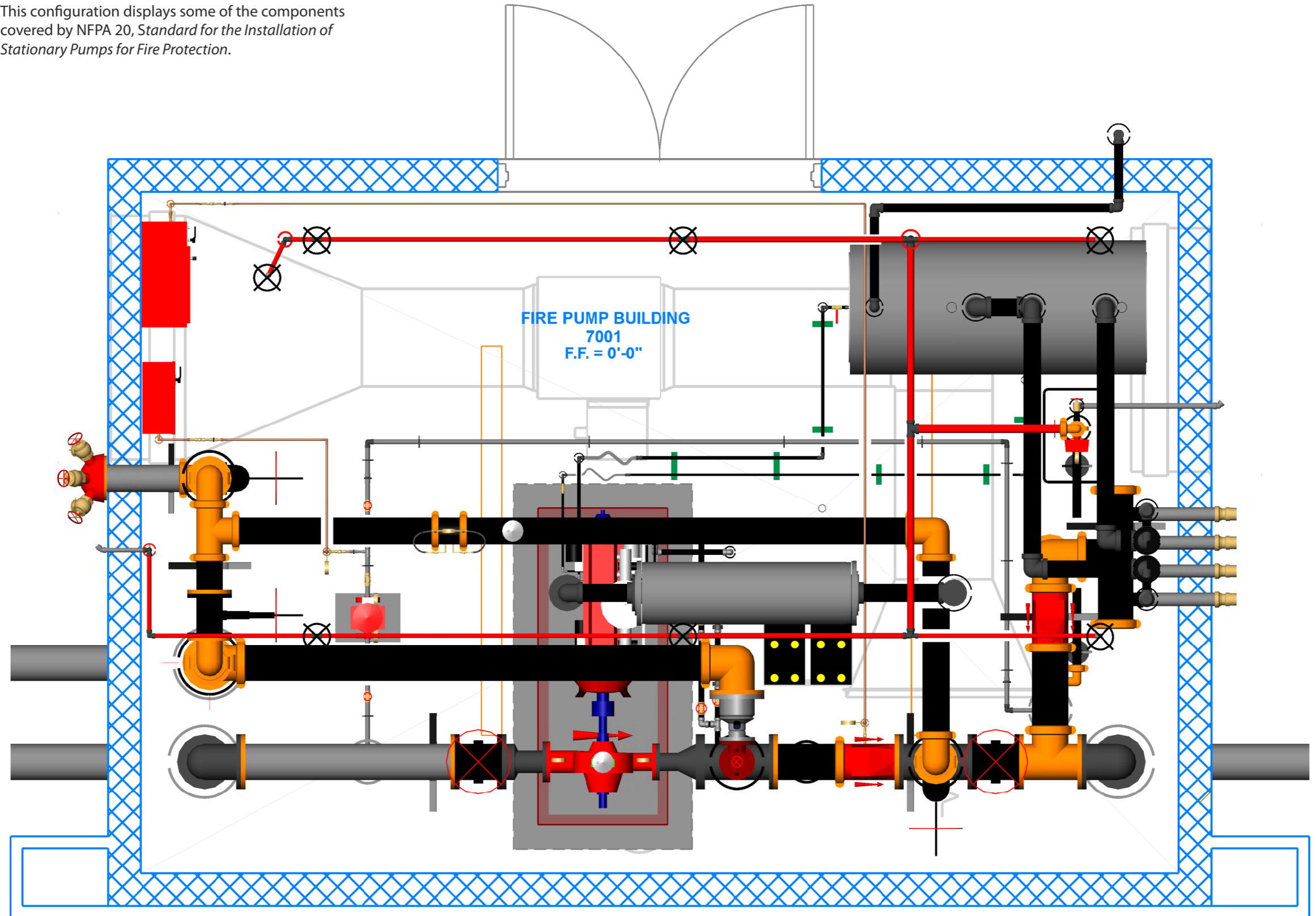
For more information on pressure control, see the feature Controlling Excess Fire Pump Pressures at the end of this chapter.

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DESIGN ALERT

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This configuration displays some of the components covered by NFPA 20, *Standard for the Installation of Stationary Pumps for Fire Protection*.



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REMINDER: UPDATING OF NFPA STANDARDS

NFPA 20, *Standard for the Installation of Stationary Pumps for Fire Protection*; NFPA 14, *Standard for the Installation of Standpipe and Hose Systems*; NFPA 291, *Recommended Practice for Fire Flow Testing and Marking of Hydrants*; and NFPA 24, *Standard for the Installation of Private Fire Service Mains and Their Appurtenances*, like all NFPA codes, standards, recommended practices, and guides (“NFPA Standards”), may be amended from time to time through the issuance of Tentative Interim Amendments or corrected by Errata. An official NFPA Standard at any point in time consists of the current edition of the document together with any Tentative Interim Amendment and any Errata then in effect. In order to determine whether an NFPA Standard has been amended through the issuance of Tentative Interim Amendments or corrected by Errata, visit the “Codes & Standards” section on NFPA’s website. There, the document information pages located at the “List of NFPA Codes & Standards” provide up-to-date, document-specific information, including any issued Tentative Interim Amendments and Errata. To view the document information page for a specific NFPA Standard, go to <http://www.nfpa.org/docinfo> to choose from the list of NFPA Standards, or use the search feature to select the NFPA Standard number (e.g., NFPA 20). The document information page includes postings of all existing Tentative Interim Amendments and Errata. It also includes the option to register for an “Alert” feature to receive an automatic email notification when new updates and other information are posted regarding the document.

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