April 27, 2015
Q: I recently heard that tag K62 under the Life Safety Code was the most cited life safety code violation. Can you explain the most common causes/reasons why a LTC facility would be found out of compliance with tag K62?

A: It is true that currently, Life Safety Code (LSC) Tag 62 regarding sprinkler testing and maintenance, is the most cited LSC tag in Illinois. K62 states that “Required automatic sprinkler systems are continuously maintained in reliable operating condition and are inspected and tested periodically.” It is important to note that the different components of the complete sprinkler system have different test and inspection frequencies. The sprinkler testing must be done by qualified individuals and properly documented. Some of the common problems noted include:

1) Lack of complete spare sprinklers and special sprinkler wrench;
2) Sprinkler head compromised by insulation, lint, grease, paint, corrosion, etc.;
3) Sprinkler head must be replaced if painted, corroded or damaged in any way. It cannot be cleaned or repaired;
4) Sprinkler gauges are past due for calibration;
5) Sprinkler gauges must be tested or replaced every 5 years;
6) Fire Department connection is obstructed;
7) Fire Department caps are missing or not secured;
8) Tamper switches and water flow devices are not tested.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 25 is the baseline for inspection, testing and maintenance of water-based fire protection systems. Compliance helps maximize system integrity to avoid failure and ensure fast, effective response in a fire emergency. The Standard governs the periodic inspection, testing and maintenance of water-based fire protection systems including land-based and marine applications. Requirements are provided for standpipe systems including hose outlets, fire pumps, sprinklers, fire service piping, and valves along with system impairment handling and reporting. 
Click here for a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) regarding NFPA 25.