



Venue: Hilton Molino Stucky Venice - Giudecca 810, Venice 30133, Italy

DAY 1 – Thursday, November 12th

8:00 – 9:30	Pre-Symposium Programming NFPA Codes and their Application to Cultural Heritage Sites Sheila Coppinger, <i>Immediate Past Chair, NFPA Technical Committee on Cultural Resources</i> Gregory Harrington, <i>NFPA, Staff Liaison, NFPA Technical Committee on Cultural Resources and Correlating Committee on Safety to Life</i> Mark Hopkins, <i>Summit Fire Consulting, Chair, NFPA Technical Committee on Cultural Resources</i> <i>This session will provide an overview of the National Fire Protection Association and its codes that apply to cultural heritage sites, including NFPA 101, Life Safety Code, NFPA 5000, Building Construction and Safety Code, NFPA 909, Code for the Protection of Cultural Resource Properties – Museums, Libraries, and Places of Worship, and NFPA 914, Code for Fire Protection of Historic Structures.</i>
9:30 - 10:30	Registration and Exhibits
10:30 – 10:45	Opening Session Welcome and Introductions, Chris Jelenewicz, PE, FSFPE, <i>SFPE CEO</i>
10:45 – 11:00	Welcome to Venice - Unique Challenges of Protecting Historic Sites, Cristinia D'Angelo, <i>The Venice Fire Department</i>
11:00 – 11:45	Keynote Jose L. Torero, PhD, CEng, FSFPE, <i>University College London</i>
11:45 – 13:00	Lunch
Historic Buildings Regulatory Oversight	
13:00 – 13:30	Fire Safety Engineering in the Renovation of the Royal Swedish Opera House Johan Hanberger, <i>National Property Board of Sweden</i>

	<i>The renovation of the Royal Swedish Opera House in Stockholm presents complex fire safety challenges driven by its heritage status, intricate structure, and large-scale modernization. With construction starting in late 2026, the project combines preservation with extensive upgrades to building systems and functionality.</i> <i>This presentation outlines fire safety strategies before and during construction, as well as for the completed building. It highlights key challenges and critical design decisions, with a particular focus on balancing the need to protect cultural heritage values against the need to achieve an adequate level of fire safety in a phased renovation of a historic landmark.</i>
13:30 – 14:00	Topic: Italian Perspective Piergiacomo Cancelliere, PhD, <i>Ministero dell'Interno Corpo Nazionale dei Vigili del Fuoco</i>
14:00 – 14:30	Topic: Global Perspective Chris Marrion, PE, FSFPE, MScFPE, <i>Marrion Fire & Risk Consulting</i>
14:30 – 15:00	Evaluating Historic Buildings Using SFPE Existing Building Guide Nick Ozog, PE, and Warren Bonisch, PE, <i>Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc.</i>
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee Break/Exhibit Hall
15:30 – 16:00	Speaker Q&A Panel
Cultural Heritage Sites	
16:00 – 16:30	The Architect's Perspective on Fire Protection Solutions for Cultural and Heritage Sites Caterina Frisone, PhD, <i>Scientific Director - Università Iuav di Venezia</i> <i>From an architect's perspective, fire protection for cultural and heritage sites is not simply a regulatory requirement, but a delicate balance between human safety, conservation of historical material, and preservation of the aesthetics of the space. Safety engineering must therefore adhere to the principle of minimal intervention. The architectural approach is based on three fundamental pillars: minimal intervention (modifying the original structure as little as possible); reversibility (any fire protection system installed must be removable in the future without damage); and fire protection systems must not compromise historical supports (e.g., frescoes, ancient wooden elements).</i> <i>Most fires in historic buildings originate from within and can be prevented or significantly reduced. As the Mackintosh Building report states, emergency preparedness is certainly essential to prevent fire disasters, but it should not be the only strategy. Protecting historic heritage can no longer be approached</i>

	<i>simply as a response to emergencies. There is a clear need to promote preventive conservation and risk reduction measures, especially in the presence of construction sites, to encourage the use of new fire prevention technologies, and to foster a culture of fire prevention in cultural institutions.</i>
16:30 – 17:00	Fire Safety Design to Protect Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris – A Close Integration of Architecture and Fire Engineering Benjamin Truchot, <i>INERIS</i> <i>This presentation describes the fire safety system design during the reconstruction of Notre-Dame de Paris. The project addresses a highly specific context: a timber roof structure, lead covering, and strict heritage constraints. The design was developed in close collaboration with the architect in charge of the cathedral's restoration. Because standard fire-safety solutions could not be directly applied, a dedicated approach was required. The strategy combines numerical modelling with experimental validation to ensure a strong demonstration of the fire system capabilities. Not only were passive measures introduced, but also an active water mist system to minimise the consequences of any fire start. One of the challenges is modelling fire spread, pyrolysis, ventilation effects, and water mist performance in this historical geometry. Coupling with experiments provides valuable data for comparison purposes. The first step focused on passive measures to limit fire propagation and control ventilation. The second step addressed the design of an efficient water-mist system with minimal water consumption. Both simulations and tests showed the strong positive impact of water mist on fire control. Overall, the work demonstrates the value of a dedicated scientific approach for protecting a non-conventional heritage structure.</i>
17:00 – 17:30	Topic: Fire Service Perspective Jakob Vedsted Andersen, <i>Greater Copenhagen Fire and Rescue Service</i>
17:30 – 18:00	The Copenhagen Stock Exchange – Renovation and Rebuilding of a Cultural Heritage Building Morten Moelgaard Schmidt, <i>Jensen Hughes</i>
18:00 – 19:00	Networking Reception (All invited)

DAY 2 – Friday, November 13th

9:00 – 10:00

Registration and Exhibits

Fire Protection Engineering Solutions

10:00 – 10:30

Topic: Exploring Suppression System Solutions
William Koffel, PE, FSFPE, *Koffel Associates & Luciano Nigro, Jensen Hughes*

10:30 – 11:00

Topic: Exploring Smoke Control, Fire Alarm, and Detection System Solutions
Wojciech Węgrzyński, PhD, *Instytut Techniki Budowlanej (ITB)*

11:00 – 11:30

Modelling Egress Given The Constraints of Heritage Sites
Steve Gwynne, PhD, *University of Greenwich*

11:30 – 12:00

Engineered Retrofitting of Heritage Building with PBD solutions
Eric Tonicello, *ISI - Ingénierie et sécurité incendie*

When listed and historic buildings need to be renovated or converted, fire safety often presents challenges for consultants. How can we balance safety, heritage preservation, and cost-effectiveness? We will present several examples where performance-based design has provided our clients with cost-effective, safe, and practical solutions.

12:00 – 13:30

Lunch

13:30 – 14:00

Most at Risk: Fire Protection During Construction Activities
Deborah Freeland, FSFPE, CPCU, ARM, FIAE, *Arthur J. Gallagher & Company*

Buildings are often at their greatest risk of fire during construction, renovation, or restoration—and for cultural heritage sites, the consequences can be catastrophic and irreversible. This presentation explores why these activities introduce elevated fire risk, particularly in historic structures where unique materials, concealed spaces, and preservation constraints complicate protection strategies. Common ignition sources are examined alongside contributing factors such as impaired or decommissioned fire protection systems, reduced compartmentation, blocked or limited access for firefighting, and changes in occupancy or fuel load. The presentation also highlights less visible risks, including inadequate policies and supervision, language or cultural barriers among multinational project teams, and gaps in coordination between stakeholders responsible for protection and preservation.

Drawing on international project experience, this presentation will discuss how these conditions can combine to produce rapid fire growth and significant loss, and will outline practical, risk-based approaches to managing fire exposure

	during construction. Emphasis will be placed on adapting protection strategies to heritage sites, where maintaining historic integrity must be balanced with safeguarding irreplaceable structures and collections.
14:00 – 14:30	Sacred Cultural Heritage at Risk: Balancing Preservation and Fire Safety in Historic Places of Worship Grunde Jomaas, PhD, <i>Fire & Risk Alliance</i> <i>Every year, fires destroy places of worship that survived centuries of war, neglect, and decay. We call each one a tragedy. We treat each one as a surprise. And then we do very little differently. This presentation asks why — and finds the answer not in the buildings themselves, but in the systems meant to protect them.</i> <i>Sacred buildings have burned since the earliest human civilisations. From ancient temples razed by conquering armies to medieval churches consumed by candle and lightning, to mosques and synagogues targeted by hate-motivated arson in the twenty-first century — the threat spans every religion, every continent, and every era. What has changed is not the fire. It is the motivation behind it, and the sophistication of society failing to prevent it.</i> <i>The core problem today is a paradox hiding in plain sight: the more officially protected a historic sacred building is, the harder it becomes to protect it from fire. Heritage listing and fire codes pull in opposite directions, and in most countries, nobody has seriously tried to reconcile them.</i> <i>Drawing on cases from Notre-Dame to Norwegian stave churches, the presentation traces a pattern that has held across centuries: we understand the risk, we have the tools, and we still lose the buildings. Not because the engineering fails — but because the institutions do. The real story is one of regulatory gaps, funding failures, and two professions — fire safety and heritage conservation — that rarely sit in the same room.</i> <i>The good news is that a handful of countries have begun to solve it. Their approach is straightforward enough to replicate anywhere.</i>
14:30 – 15:00	Topic: Case Study & Tour Introduction Renata Codello, <i>Fondazione Giorgio Cini</i>
15:00 – 15:05	Closing Session Chris Jelenewicz, PE, FSFPE, <i>SFPE CEO</i>

15:30 – 19:30

ADD ON: Technical Tour – Fondazione CINI – Isola di San Giorgio Maggiore

Participants will enjoy a private visit to the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, located on the serene Isola di San Giorgio Maggiore, directly across the water from Piazza San Marco.

The tour offers a rare opportunity to explore the historic monastery complex, meticulously restored after centuries of transformations, and to access the Manica Lunga, Fondazione's iconic library. Originally a 16th-century Benedictine dormitory, the Manica Lunga has been converted into a striking contemporary research library, known for its dramatic linear design, vaulted ceilings, and elegant interplay of light and space. It is considered one of the most architecturally significant library restorations in Italy.

This tour is organized by SFPE Italy and will provide a technical guide to explain some of the technical aspects of the recent renovation. This tour has a limited capacity, so register early to secure your space.

Saturday, November 14th

9:00 – 14:00

ADD ON: Guided Venetian Tour including Doge's Palace

Participants will begin with a private cruise across the picturesque Venetian Lagoon, offering stunning views of the city's iconic skyline and waterways, ending at the **Cornoldi Pier**.

After arriving at the pier, attendees will begin a walking tour, to one of the city's most recognizable landmarks, **St. Mark's Square**. The highlight of the experience is a guided visit to the magnificent **Doge's Palace**, the former seat of power of the Venetian Republic.

Following the tour of the palace, participants will be free to browse local boutiques, relax at a historic café, admire the surrounding architecture, or simply soak in the atmosphere of one of Europe's most famous public spaces before returning by private boat to the Hilton.

09:00: Departure from the Hilton (Please be ready in the lobby by the departure time)

09:20: Arrival at Cornoldi Pier

09:45 – 11:30: [Doge's Palace Tour](#)

13:35: Departure from Cornoldi Pier

14:00: Return at Hilton

Last Updated: August 11, 2026.

Topics and times are subject to change.



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