

Date of Hearing: August 5, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 1299 (Arreguín) – As Amended June 17, 2026

Policy Committee:	Emergency Management	Vote:	4 - 2
	Labor and Employment		7 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: Yes Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill enacts the State Fire Marshal Fire Suppression Education and Training Safety Act (Act) to codify and revise existing regulations adopted by the State Fire Marshal (SFM) to certify and register fire sprinkler fitters.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Prohibits a person from working on a fire suppression system without being certified as a fire sprinkler fitter or registered as a trainee or apprentice by the SFM, and establishes training and other application requirements.
- 2) Requires a licensed C-16 Fire Protection Contractor to ensure all people assigned to work on a fire suppression system are appropriately certified or registered and in compliance with supervisor-to-apprentice and supervisor-to-trainee ratios.
- 3) Requires the SFM, upon receipt of a written complaint of an alleged violation of the Act, to notify the local fire authority and request the authority investigate the complaint, and authorizes the SFM to investigate the complaint if the authority fails to do so.
- 4) Authorizes the SFM or local fire authority to inspect project worksites to ensure workers possess valid certifications or registrations; subjects a person who cannot show such proof to penalties determined by the SFM; subjects a person who violates the Act to a notice of violation or correction order issued by the SFM or authority; authorizes the SFM or authority to issue a stop work order if the violation or order is not immediately corrected; and requires parts of the system installed by an unauthorized person to be subject to removal.
- 5) Requires the SFM to implement provisions related to the administrative processes, fees, and penalties applicable to a fire sprinkler fitter trainee, apprentice, and certified professional pursuant to existing regulations.
- 6) Makes a violation of the Act or a subsequent order, rule, or regulation a misdemeanor.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) Minor and absorbable costs to the SFM, as this bill generally codifies the SFM's Automatic Extinguishing Systems (AES) Certification regulations currently in effect and the SFM's pending rulemaking package to reenact prior provisions of the regulations recently struck down by a court.

- 2) Likely absorbable cost pressures to the courts to the extent there are prosecutions of the misdemeanor charge specified by this bill and to the counties to subsequently incarcerate a convicted individual. Although this bill provides that a violation of the Act or a subsequent order, rule, or regulation is a misdemeanor, existing law already provides that a violation of the chapter of law regarding the SFM, including a subsequent order, rule, or regulation, is a misdemeanor. The AES Certification regulations, which this bill generally codifies under the Act, were made pursuant to the chapter of law for which a violation is already a misdemeanor. Thus, a violation of the Act likely would not constitute a new misdemeanor.
- 3) The Department of Justice reports no significant fiscal impact from this bill.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

When properly installed and maintained, [fire sprinkler systems] are extraordinarily effective – but that effectiveness depends entirely on the skill and training of the workers who install, inspect, and service them. SB 1299 ensures that California has a clear, enforceable framework for certifying and training fire sprinkler fitters.

This bill is sponsored by the Sprinkler Fitters Association of California and supported by other labor organizations and national and local fire sprinkler associations.

- 2) **Fire Sprinkler Regulations.** AB 433 (Gordon), Chapter 377, Statutes of 2013, granted the SFM authority to adopt regulations and standards deemed necessary to ensure fire safety in all types of occupancies in California, including regulations for the certification, registration, or licensing of fire sprinkler fitters. The resulting AES Certification regulations were developed by a workgroup consisting of representatives from industry, labor, enforcing agencies, and SFM staff; approved by the SFM's AES Technical Advisory Committee; and went into effect on July 1, 2017. The SFM periodically updates the regulations, including exam administration and fee structures, based on direct input from the advisory committee and reports that 4,108 fire sprinkler fitters were certified or registered in 2025.

In 2019, a coalition of plaintiffs (*Fire Guard Corporation, et al. v. California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection*) challenged the AES Certification regulations on the basis that rulemaking procedures under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) were violated. In December 2025, the Sacramento Superior Court issued a judgment and injunction, finding that certain registration and supervision provisions of the regulations violated the appropriate public comment periods under the APA. Specifically, the court invalidated: (a) the requirement that new hires must enroll in a state- or federally approved apprenticeship program within one year of their hire date, and (b) the supervision ratios that restricted a certified fire sprinkler fitter to managing only apprentices and a maximum of two trainees. However, the remaining regulations requiring fire sprinkler fitter certification or registration are still in effect today, and the court ruling explicitly preserves the authority of the SFM to put forth new regulations. This bill generally codifies the current AES Certification regulations, as well as the provisions invalidated by the court that the SFM is simultaneously moving through the rulemaking process.