



Session 2D

"Not What it Appeared to Be: Investigation of Damage from a Frozen Sprinkler System"

Mr. Baldassarra will describe the investigation into the cause of a frozen sprinkler system installed in a residential building that resulted in substantial property damage. Initially thought to be due to the lack of maintaining an adequate ambient temperature during one of the coldest days in the last 50 years, the actual reason for the system freezing and the subsequent damage was much more complicated – a number of technical issues that are familiar to experienced fire protection engineers, and some that may not.

In this unusual loss scenario, Mr. Baldassarra will identify the initial allegations made by the plaintiff, the process of the investigation, and the facts that were later identified, resulting in a dismissal of the plaintiff's case before the matter was ever presented in court. The presentation will be accompanied by a number of photographs and other illustrations that will help participants understand the investigation method and the conclusions of the investigation.



Carl F. Baldassarra, PE, FSFPE
Principal; Wiss, Janney Elstner and Associates

Carl Baldassarra is a Principal at Wiss, Janney Elstner and Associates in Northbrook, Illinois, and leads the firm's fire protection practice. He has a BS degree in fire protection engineering, a Master's degree in business, and is a licensed engineer in several states.

Mr. Baldassarra leads project teams involving fire protection/life safety analysis, code consultation, fire protection system design, loss investigation, and litigation support. He is also very active in a number of ICC and NFPA codes- and standards-making technical committees, including the IBC, IFC, NFPA 1, 13, 90A, 92, 101 and 5000. He was chair of the International Code Council's Code Technology Committee, responsible for many of the major changes which have been adopted into the IBC over the last ten years. He was also a co-chair of IBC's Ad Hoc Committee on Tall Wood Buildings, responsible for the new language that was adopted for the 2021 edition of the IBC.

Prior to joining WJE, Mr. Baldassarra was Executive Vice President at RJA and President of Schirmer Engineering Corporation. A 40-year veteran of the fire protection engineering profession, he is well-versed in systems design, code compliance, performance-based design, loss investigations and project management. Carl has also been active in the Society of Fire Protection Engineers, the international organization representing practicing fire protection engineers globally, serving on its Board of Directors and as its President in 2014. Carl served as Vice Chair on the Executive Committee of the Chicago Committee on High-Rise Buildings 2012-2014.

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