

Reliable®

365
FRANK J. FEE.
PLUMBING
AND
HEATING



100 Years of Service and Quality

THE FOUNDING AND HISTORY OF THE RELIABLE AUTOMATIC SPRINKLER COMPANY



Ellis Island, New York



Monaghan, Ireland

Frank J. Fee, founder of Reliable®, was the youngest of nine children, born in County Monaghan, Ireland on July 14, 1872. In 1888, 17-year-old Frank departed from Liverpool, England on the S.S. Britannic, arriving on Ellis Island, NY on

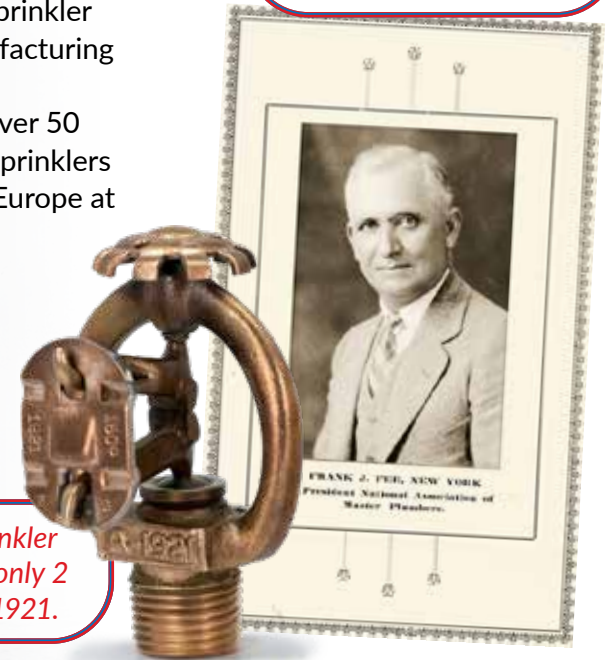
New Year's Day 1889. He settled in Manhattan where he began as a laborer and completed an apprenticeship in the plumbing industry. Frank continued as a journeyman plumber and became a member of Local No. 2, Journeymen Plumber's Association, U.S.A. By 1896, he was a Master Plumber and operated a plumbing business on West 40th Street in New York City known as Frank J. Fee Plumbing & Heating Contractor.

In 1911, Frank J. Fee was elected to Vice President of the National Association of Master Plumbers, and in 1912 he was elected as President. Frank pioneered the concept of apprenticeship training as a means to maintain and uplift the quality of work within the industry and was an effective lobbyist, devoting 45 years of selfless service to local, state, and national associations.

In the wake of tragic early 20th Century fires such as the Iroquois Theatre (Chicago, 1901) and the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire (New York City, 1911), public outcry led to legislation and building codes mandating the use of automatic sprinkler systems in many manufacturing and public facilities¹. Although there were over 50 manufacturers of fire sprinklers in North America and Europe at that time, many of the sprinklers and valves in service were rated "unreliable" or "very unreliable"².



Frank J. Fee's 1897 Society of Plumbers & Gas Fitters NYC working card.



The Issue "A" Sprinkler was produced for only 2 years: 1920 and 1921.

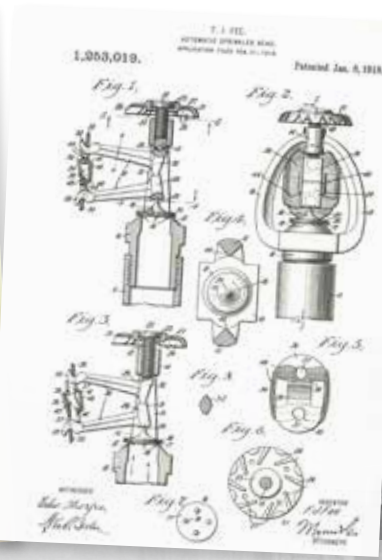
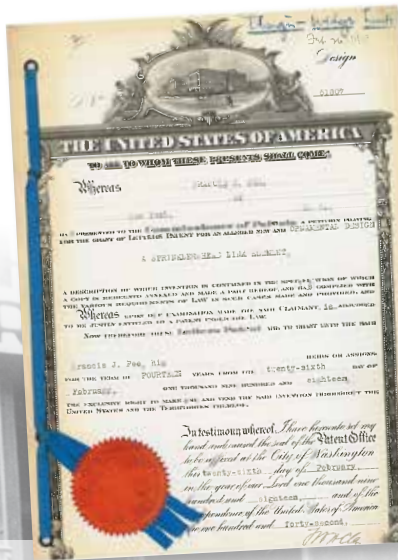
¹ Solis, Hilda L. "What the Triangle Shirtwaist fire means for workers now" Washington Post (March 18, 2011)

² Dana, Gorham, 1914. Automatic Sprinkler Protection, Thomas Groom & Co., Inc., Boston.

Recognizing the opportunity for an improved, stronger link sprinkler, Frank J. Fee began to design automatic fire sprinkler devices as early as February 1916. His first patent application³ was awarded in January 1918. In February of the same year, he received another patent for a fire sprinkler with a fusible link element⁴. On January 23rd, 1920, Frank formed The Reliable Automatic Sprinkler Co., Inc.

Frank steered his new venture through its early years, often investing personal capital and foregoing his salary to allow the company to flourish, even in the face of The Great Depression.

In 1927
Reliable placed
its first print
advertisement
in *The Plumbers
Trade Journal*.



Frank J. Fee's first patents (1918)



Product advertisement (1920s)



³ Patent No. 1,253,019
⁴ Patent No. D51,807

The onset of prohibition required Reliable to attain special permits for specialty denatured alcohol, necessary for use in the preparation of soldering flux.

Governor Franklin Delano Roosevelt personally corresponded with Frank J. Fee in 1929.



STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
ALBANY

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
GOVERNOR

January 9, 1929.

Frank J. Fee, Esq. President,
250 West 27th Street,
New York City.

Dear Mr. Fee:

Thanks for your letter. It is nice of you
to think of me as you do.

Our friend Jim Hoey ^{came} ~~was~~ up to the Inauguration and all of us
were glad to see him.

I am pleased to say that my health is very good indeed.

Cordially yours,

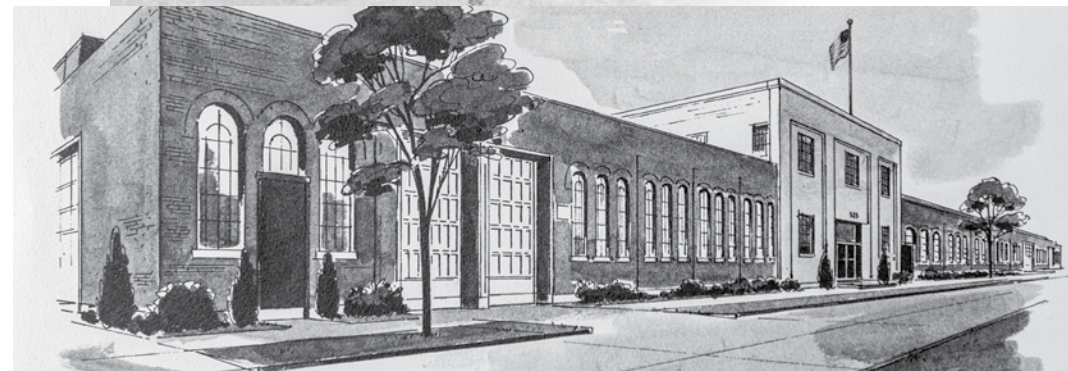
FDR/vh

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Franklin D. Roosevelt'.



Frank J. Fee Jr. playing baseball for NYU (1930s)

By 1939, in a position of financial stability, Reliable moved to a new location at 78 Bronx Street in Mt. Vernon, New York. Son Frank J. Fee Jr., a recent Mechanical Engineering graduate from New York University, was the primary architect and engineer for the new facility. Operating from its new location, Reliable customers benefitted from both improved capacity and the introduction of several key products.



Headquarters from 1960-2006, 525 N. MacQuesten Parkway, Mt. Vernon, NY



Official publication of NY State Plumbers Association (1945)

During April 1941, Reliable was invited by the U.S. War Department to produce automatic sprinkler equipment for hospitals on military bases. In August 1941, the War Production Board called all sprinkler manufacturers to discuss problems in obtaining raw materials. Frank J. Fee Jr. was appointed to a four-person sprinkler industry committee to advise the War Production Board.

After Frank Sr.'s death on March 23rd, 1945, Frank Jr. assumed

the company Presidency and oversaw expansion by adapting Reliable to the booming global post-war construction market.

Frank J. Fee Jr. continued to promote and support the sprinkler industry by becoming an active member of the National Fire Protection Association. He served as Secretary-Treasurer, a member of the Board of Directors, Vice Chairman of the Board, and ultimately Chairman.



NATIONAL FIRE WASTE COUNCIL
U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE APRIL 8, 1949

National Fire Waste Council, Frank J. Fee Jr. seated left side second chair (April 8, 1949)

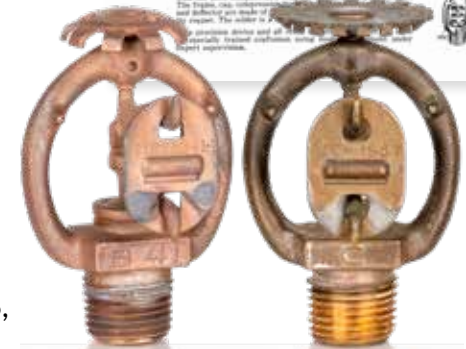
The NFPA's Board of Directors established the Frank J. Fee Jr. Scholarship, an academic scholarship in fire protection at the University of Maryland, which is still awarded to this day. He also became a Charter Member of the Society of Fire Protection Engineers.

Frank Jr. also supported the National Fire Sprinkler Association, serving on the Board of Directors and in the positions of Treasurer, President and Board Chairman.

In 1969, grandson Frank J. Fee III was named as Executive Vice President, and in late 1976, after his father's death, assumed the Presidency. At the same time, 2nd grandson Kevin T. Fee was elected as Executive Vice President, with Frank J. Fee's fourth grandson Michael joining the company shortly thereafter.



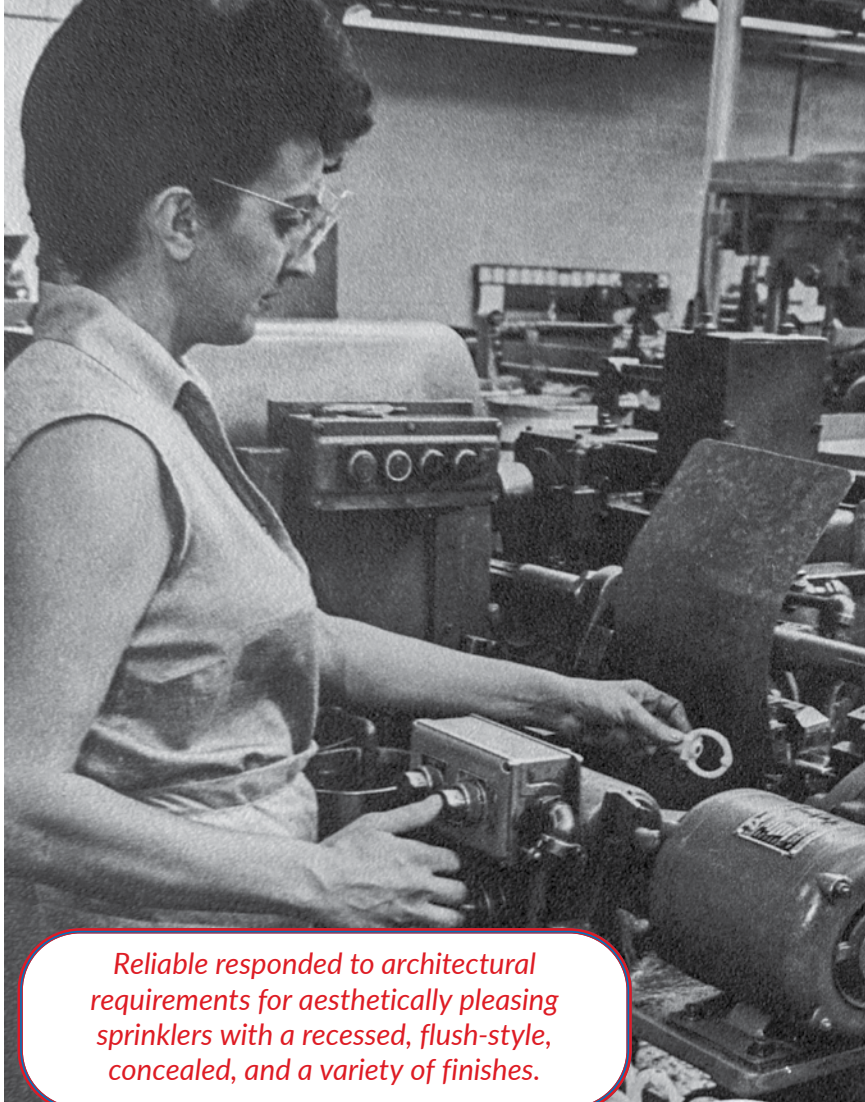
Product Brochure (1950s)



Issue "B"; Model C



National Automatic Sprinkler and Fire Control Association Industry Publication, front cover, with Frank J. Fee Jr. obituary (1976)



Reliable responded to architectural requirements for aesthetically pleasing sprinklers with a recessed, flush-style, concealed, and a variety of finishes.



Zippo lighter promotional item (1960s)



Model F 12 mm ashtray promotional item (1974)

The new leadership team saw the growth potential when building codes began to recognize fire sprinkler protection as not only critical for property conservation but also the protection of life.

The management team set about restructuring Reliable's operations, sales, and marketing

strategies to meet this new opportunity. The top priorities were redefining the product line, new product development, and enhancing their world-class manufacturing capabilities.

Product Bulletin (1975)



Model F1 8 mm display (1970s)

Across the third generation of leadership, Reliable was challenged by five multi-year recessions. During the late 1970s and 1980s, the first steps were taken to build international sales and distribution beyond what had been solely a Fee family sales team in a single location in New York. Three U.S. Regional Managers and one International Regional Manager

joined the company, and three additional distribution centers in Atlanta, Chicago, and Los Angeles were established. In 1982 an additional property was acquired in Mt. Vernon to enhance production flow and improve distribution operations.

Mt. Rasco Promotional Figure (1970s)

In order to supply sprinkler contractors with all necessary elements for a sprinkler system, in 1987 Reliable added sourced System Components to complement the manufactured line of sprinklers and valves. Shortly after, in 1988, Reliable outgrew the Mt. Vernon locations and moved non-production-based offices to Elmsford, New York.



100 years of sprinkler designs

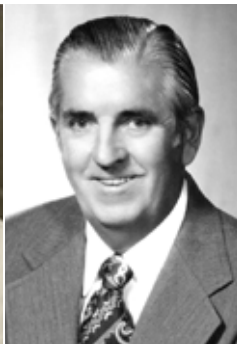


H22 ESFR Sprinkler (1998)

Four Generations of Fee Family Leadership



Frank J. Fee
 Founder and Former President (1920-1945)



Frank J. Fee Jr.
 Former President (1945-1976)



Frank J. Fee III-
 Former President (1976-2015) and Chairman of the Board



Kevin T. Fee
 President (2015-Present)



Michael R. Fee
 Special Advisor to the President



Kevin T. Fee Jr.
 Vice President, Sales, Americas



Frank J. Fee IV
 Vice President, Marketing & Bus. Dev.

It was clear in the early 2000s that capacity in the New York facilities would not be adequate for the next industry growth cycle. In 2004, the decision was made to relocate valve and sprinkler production, product development and technical services to a new 305,000 ft² state-of-the-art facility in

Liberty, South Carolina. The relocation decision embodied the Fee commitment to remain a U.S. manufacturing company, confident the new facility would allow Reliable to remain competitive in a global market. Full operation in Liberty began in July 2007 and was expanded in 2018 to a total of 467,000 ft².



In 2015, Kevin T. Fee was promoted to President, while Frank J. Fee III took on the new role of Chairman of the Board with Michael R. Fee later becoming Special Advisor to the President.

The third generation of Fee family continues to support the fire protection industry associations that are devoted to saving lives and protecting property through the promotion of fire sprinklers.

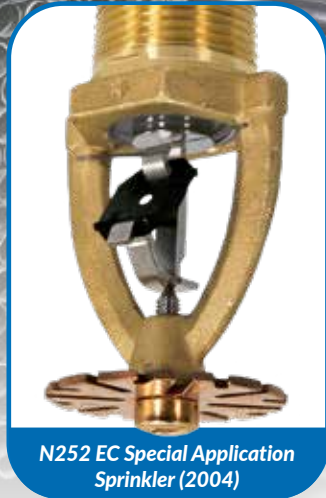
Frank J. Fee III served the NFSA and NFPA as a long-time Officer and Board Member including the position of Chairman of the Board at the NFSA. In addition, Frank J. Fee III was presented with the AFSA's Parmelee Award (1990), NFPA's Distinguished Service Award (1998), and NFSA's Golden Sprinkler and Hall of Fame Awards (1998 & 2018). Kevin T. Fee continues as the longest standing NFSA Board member and former Chairman who also has been recognized with the NFSA Golden Sprinkler Award (2008). Michael R. Fee served as a long-time member and Chairman of the AFSA Supplier Council.



Automated assembly of KFR Series Sprinklers (2019)



Pipe Fabrication facilities open (2006)



N252 EC Special Application Sprinkler (2004)



KFR Fast Response Link Sprinklers (2018 & 2019)



Model DDV Diaphragm Deluge Valve (2019)

Reliable's engaging culture treats its employees as an extended family, many of whom choose to serve for decades.



Sales & Technical Service support the fire protection industry by participating in trade shows, technical seminars, and live demonstrations.



Now under the Presidency of Kevin T. Fee and Board Chairmanship of Frank J. Fee III, the global sales, technical services, and marketing teams total over 100 professionals.



The 2010s also marked the beginning of the Fee family's 4th generation of leadership at Reliable, with Frank J. Fee's great-grandsons Kevin "KJ" Fee Jr. and FJ Fee IV joining the management team.

KJ and FJ continue to honor Frank J. Fee's vision to produce the highest-quality USA-produced fire protection products, a commitment to service and continuous innovation, and the philosophy that a company serves – and never competes with – its customers. Reliable continues to look toward the future with ingenuity and integrity while leveraging technology to bring the best products to the market.

In 2020, Reliable is honored to celebrate its Centennial with those who have made this milestone possible.



Protected by Reliable:
St. Patrick's Cathedral, NYC, USA; Leadenhall Building, London, UK; 'New M4' Tunnel, Sydney, Australia



Reliable Automatic Sprinkler Co., Inc.
Manufacturer & Global Distributor of
Fire Protection Products

January 2020

January 23rd, 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of our grandfather's incorporation of the Reliable Automatic Sprinkler Co., Inc.

To mark this momentous occasion, we send our sincerest thanks to our family of employees, trusted customers, professional service partners, associations, suppliers, fellow manufacturers, and all the men and women who have dedicated their lives to the protection of life and property.

From our humble New York beginnings to a 21st-century global organization, Reliable has grown by serving the industry with integrity, ingenuity, quality, and commitment to service.

Thank you for helping us reach our Centennial, we look forward to celebrating with all of you in this coming year.

Sincerely,

Kevin T. Fee

Kevin T. Fee
President

Frank Fee

F.J. Fee III
Chairman of the Board

www.reliablesprinkler.com