



Fire Alarm Permits

Effective 1/6/16

Modifications to Existing Systems

The installation, relocation or modification of an existing system falls under 3 categories based on scope. They are:

Maintenance repair or replacement of any number of devices with no panel replacement: No permit or inspection is required

4 devices or less added or relocated with no panel replacement: No permit or inspection is required

5 devices added, relocated or any work involving replacement of an alarm panel:
A permit is required and the system will be inspected for proper installation, monitoring time response and strobe synchronization.

New Systems

A permit is required and the system will be inspected for proper installation, monitoring response time and strobe synchronization. Also, any other relevant NFPA 72 requirements may be tested at the discretion of the inspector.

For new systems installed on or after January 1, 2015 or for systems where a change of provider is made on or after January 1, 2015, West County EMS & Fire requires the alarm monitoring service to be UL Listed, per the West County Overarching Building and Fire Code.

Requirements for all systems

Alarm testing requiring witnessed testing (as determined by the inspector) shall be scheduled and conducted between the hours of 8:30AM and 5PM Monday thru Friday. Off-hour inspections and testing are not available.

In lieu of a witnessed test, the Fire Marshal may elect to accept a completed and signed NFPA 72 Record of Completion form as applicable to the scope of work for the permit.

New alarm systems and alarm systems in new buildings or significant additions will be tested for proper monitoring response and 911 address. In such a case, the alarm



system must NOT be called out of service in advance, as it is essential to capture and test the monitoring company's response when they do not have prior notice of a test.

Monitored alarm systems central station monitoring services shall transmit the alarm to Central County 911 in less than 90 seconds.

Partial Renovations in Multi-Tenant Facilities and Medical Facilities

It is imperative that fire alarm systems not be unnecessarily sounded as nuisance alarms encourage distrust or disregard for the alarm system in an actual emergency. In buildings such as multi-tenant office buildings and medical facilities such as hospitals, alarm testing and certification should be done in as concise of a manner as possible.

Where successive projects and renovations will occur in a single building or region of a medical campus, use of the NFPA 72 Record of Completion is strongly encouraged as long as the facility owner and/or management entity is certain that devices have been tested by the installation company. Any AHJ-required or facility-desired witnessed testing (witnessed by the Fire Marshal, Building Inspector or their designee) should be postponed until completion of all work in the building or region of the medical campus.

NFPA 72 Record of Completion forms should be forwarded to the Fire Marshal either at the time of Final Inspection or may be held and batched until completion of all work in the building or region of a medical campus.

Any random testing or incidental witnessed operation of the alarm system that reveals faulty devices or products or questionable workmanship may cause the inspector to suspend the ability to accept the NFPA 72 Record of Completion and require fully witnessed tests.

Synchronization of Strobes

Synchronization of strobes in a commercial building is essential to minimize negative impacts to persons with various medical conditions, including epilepsy and diagnoses on the autism spectrum. Per NFPA 72 requirements, all strobes whose flash is directly or indirectly in the view (including peripheral vision) of an occupant shall be synchronized. This shall include synchronization of strobes between separated spaces where glass walls, doors or windows allow the device or its flash to be seen in combination with any other device or its flash. This metric shall not apply if the flash can only be seen momentarily while a normally closed door is open while a person is in passage from one space to another.



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Common synchronization issues are found where synchronization conflicts between a suite and a common hallway or lobby or in exit stairwells where strobes in the stairwells are linked to an adjacent floor's system but the systems are not in synch from one floor to the next. Other synchronization issues are commonly found when different devices are used within the same circuit. It is imperative that the installation contractor check for synchronization issues not only throughout the work area but the adjacent areas as well.

Public and Common Areas Defined

As it pertains to applicability of the installation of visual notification devices under the code, we require the installation of visual notification devices in the following areas in addition to any other specific code requirements:

- Common Hallways
- Meeting and/or Conference Rooms
- Kitchen and Break Rooms
- Restrooms designed with more than one toilet or urinal
- Waiting Rooms
- Locker Rooms
- Dining Areas
- Any other area designed for use by two or more persons

Exception: Visual notification devices are not interpreted as being automatically required in space designated as an individual's office which may otherwise be furnished with a small table, or several chairs intended for impromptu discussion or meeting by two or more persons.