



# FIRE PREVENTION GUIDELINE

<b>Title: Automatic Fire Alarm Systems-Inspection, Testing, Maintenance</b>		
<b>Number:</b> FPG-23	<b>Effective Date:</b> 01/01/2023	<b>Revised Date:</b> 03/01/2023
<b>Code References:</b> California Fire Code (CFC), California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 19, Merced Municipal Code (MMC)		
<b>Note:</b> <i>This guideline is a summary of Fire Department clarifications and interpretations of City and State Codes and nationally recognized standards in accordance with the currently adopted edition of the Fire Code. Information contained herein applies to typical circumstances and may not address all situations.</i>		

### Scope

This Guideline has been developed to assist property owners and managers with the inspection, testing and maintenance requirements for automatic fire alarm systems in the City of Merced.

### Codes and Guidelines

This guideline shall apply to all automatic fire alarm systems in accordance with the California Fire Code, California Code of Regulations, Title19 and the Merced Municipal Code.

### Permits Required

An operational permit is not required for inspection, testing or maintenance of automatic extinguishing systems. Construction permits are required for installation, modification and major repairs.

### Definitions

**False Alarm:** "False alarm" - is the deliberate reporting of an alarm for which no such fire or emergency actually exists and shall also mean the deliberate or accidental transmission of alarm signal, either silent or audible, prompting a response to be made by the Fire Department when an emergency situation for which the alarm system was intended does not exist.

**Inspection:** A visual examination of a system or portion thereof to verify that it appears to be in an operating condition and is free of physical damage.

**Maintenance:** Work performed to keep equipment operable or to make repairs.

**Service:** The performance of testing and maintenance on an automatic fire extinguishing system.

### Specific Requirements

#### 1. **General**

The building owner shall be responsible for ensuring that fire and life safety systems are maintained in an operational condition at all times. Service personnel shall meet the qualification requirements of National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 72 for maintaining, inspecting, and testing fire alarm systems. A written record shall be maintained on site and be made available to the Fire Department upon request.



## FIRE PREVENTION GUIDELINE

### 2. Notification

Personnel responsible for the premises to be inspected or tested should be notified in advance and requested to advise all occupants. On the day of the inspection, and prior to any functional tests, all concerned parties should again be notified, e.g.,

- a. Building owner, manager, or responsible representative.
- b. Police/Fire Dispatch Center (209)-385-6912
- c. Fire Alarm Monitoring Company
- d. Maintenance engineer, security manager, PBX Operator, etc., where applicable.
- e. All occupants, if applicable.

### 3. Certified Personnel

Fire alarms shall be installed and tested by an individual who is qualified and experienced in the inspection, testing and maintenance of fire alarm systems. Examples of qualified fire alarm service personnel include:

- a. Factory trained and certified by the fire alarm manufacturer for the type of fire alarm equipment qualified to service.
- b. National Institute of Certification in Engineering Technology (NICET) fire alarm certified.
- c. Certified by a State or Local Authority.
- d. International Municipal Signal Association (IMSA) fire alarm certified.
- e. Other trained and qualified personnel employed by an organization listed by a national testing laboratory for the servicing of fire alarm systems.

### 4. Signals

Alarm, supervisory and trouble signals shall be distinctly different and shall be automatically transmitted to an Underwriter Laboratory or locally approved central station, remote station or proprietary supervising station as defined by national standards, or when approved by the Fire Marshal, sound an audible signal at a constantly attended location with the following exceptions;

- a. Underground key or hub valves in roadway boxes provided by the municipality or public utility need not be supervised.
- b. Backflow prevention device test valves located in a limited area sprinkler system supply piping shall be locked in the open position. In occupancies required to be equipped with a fire alarm system, the backflow preventer shall be locked in the open position and be electronically supervised by a tamper switch installed in accordance with NFPA 72 and be separately annunciated.



## FIRE PREVENTION GUIDELINE

### 5. **Inspection, Testing and Maintenance Service**

Fire detection, alarm and extinguishing systems shall be maintained in an operative condition at all times, and shall be replaced or repaired where defective. Nonrequired fire protection systems and equipment shall be inspected, tested, and maintained or removed.

### 6. **False Alarms**

False alarms - the owner and occupants of any premises, which generates more than two false alarms in any calendar year, will be required to pay response costs for any and all false alarms for the third and any subsequent alarm in that time frame. Such costs shall constitute a debt to the city and are collectible by the city in the same manner as in the case of an obligation under a contract.

### 7. **Systems Out of Service**

A Fire Watch is required for buildings or occupancies that have a fire alarm system that is out of service, or when required by the Fire Chief.

- a. Responsibility: The owner, property manager, or project manager has the sole responsibility for the fire watch. The responsible party in conjunction with the authority having jurisdiction shall assign to the fire watch as many personnel as necessary and such person shall provide:
  - i. A means of reliable communication to fire department dispatch (land line: 9-1-1 or for a non-emergency 209-385-6912).
  - ii. Detailed instruction of the method, location and frequency to be patrolled.
  - iii. Instruction in the procedure for reporting emergencies to the Fire Department.
  - iv. A method of alerting building occupants and an evacuation procedure when two or more fire watch personnel are required.
  - v. Any other instruction required by the authority having jurisdiction.
- b. Fire Watch personnel shall at minimum perform the following functions:
  - i. Be able to communicate effectively.
  - ii. Have a reliable method of communicating an emergency to the local public safety answering point (PSAP) via 9-1-1 or the non-emergency number (209-385-6912).
  - iii. Be thoroughly familiar with the area they are patrolling.



## FIRE PREVENTION GUIDELINE

- iv. Fire watch shall be performed by personnel solely dedicated to the fire watch and no other facility related activities or events.
  - v. Patrol their designated area at least once each half hour (24-hours a day) until the system is operational.
  - vi. Make reports as instructed. A written record of patrol rounds and any significant information shall be recorded in a logbook.
  - vii. Relay any special orders or pertinent information to relief personnel.
  - viii. Remain on duty and awake until properly relieved.
  - ix. Alert building occupants of an emergency and direct evacuation when required.
- c. Log Book:
- i. The owner, property manager, or project manager in charge or control of the premises shall provide a logbook that contains a directory of names, telephone numbers, and other information to assist in making emergency calls and calls to key personnel.
  - ii. The logbook shall be maintained on the premises and be immediately available for inspection by the Merced City Fire Department.
  - iii. The logbook shall be used to record a history of patrol rounds
- 8. Sprinkler system supervision alarms**
- a. All required fire alarm and fire extinguishing systems shall be monitored by an approved supervising station in accordance with NFPA 72, including the following: All valves controlling the water supply for automatic sprinkler systems and water-flow switches on all sprinkler systems in new or existing buildings shall be electrically supervised when there are twenty or more sprinklers in any occupancy.
  - b. Valve supervision and water-flow alarm and trouble signals shall be distinctly different and shall be automatically transmitted to an Underwriter Laboratory or locally approved central station, remote station or proprietary supervising station as defined by national standards, or, when approved by the Fire Chief, sound an audible signal at a constantly attended location.
    - i. EXCEPTION: Underground key or hub valves in roadway boxes provided by the municipality or public utility need not be supervised.
- 9. Protective covers**



## FIRE PREVENTION GUIDELINE

The Fire Chief is authorized to require the installation of listed manual fire alarm box protective covers for all new or remodeled buildings or in existing buildings with nuisance alarms, to prevent malicious and accidental false alarms or to provide the manual fire alarm box with protection from physical damage. The protective cover shall be transparent or red in color with a transparent face to permit visibility of the manual fire alarm. Each cover shall include proper operating instructions. A protective cover that emits a local alarm shall not be installed unless approved. Each cover shall not exceed a combined projection over 4 inches from the surface of the wall into walkways, halls, corridors, passageways or aisles.

### 10. Records/Reports

- a. Records: A copy of inspection and service test reports documented to comply with reports as required by NFPA 72 and the Fire Marshal shall be maintained at the premises and be made available on request to the Merced City Fire Department. At minimum, the records shall provide the following information.
  - i. Date and time
  - ii. Service organization
  - iii. Property name
  - iv. Monitoring Company ( A copy of UL Certification may be required)
  - v. Approving agency
  - vi. Type of transmission
  - vii. Service type
    1. Weekly
    2. Monthly
    3. Quarterly
    4. Semiannually
    5. Annually
    6. Other
  - viii. Manufacturer and description of devices and circuit information
  - ix. All devices tested
  - x. Any deficiencies and corrections made
- b. Deficiencies: The owner or occupant is required to promptly correct or repair any deficiencies, damaged parts or impairments found while performing maintenance and testing. When repairs are completed



## **FIRE PREVENTION GUIDELINE**

documentation is required to be submitted to The Compliance Engine (contact your service provider for details).