



Department of Permitting Services
Division of Commercial Building Construction
 2425 Reedie Dr. 7th Floor Wheaton, MD 20902

ADMINISTRATIVE INTERPRETATION

Year	POLICY
2024	Fire Alarm System Repair, Replacement and Required Upgrade
<p><u>SCOPE</u></p> <p>1.0 This administrative policy applies to existing buildings with existing fire alarm systems where a fire alarm control unit is proposed or required to be replaced.</p> <p>1.1 The purpose of this policy is to clarify when the fire alarm system is required to be upgraded to conform to the current code(s) and standard(s) adopted by the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services and detail submission requirements to allow for an efficient permit approval.</p> <p><u>DEFINITIONS</u></p> <p>2.0 Emergency Replacement – When the fire alarm system is out of service due to a failure of a fire alarm control unit that cannot be repaired and requires immediate replacement. Immediate replacement shall be defined as within 14 calendar days of the occurrence of the impairment</p> <p>2.1 Non-emergency Replacement – When expansion or replacement of the existing fire alarm system is required due to tenant improvement, elevator upgrade, etc. and the existing fire alarm system is not capable of supporting the expansion, and/or the voluntary replacement of an existing fire alarm control unit when the existing fire alarm system is still functioning as originally designed and installed.</p> <p>2.2 Fire Protection Agreement – A legally binding agreement between the Department of Permitting Services and the building owner which sets forth terms for the long-term replacement of a fire protection or fire alarm system within a building. Agreements are recommended for projects in excess of one year but are generally limited to three years.</p> <p>2.3 Repair – The replacement of fire alarm initiating devices, visible notification appliances and or components <i>not</i> part of a fire alarm control unit which does not require a permit from DPS. The replacement device or component must be equivalent to the original device or component and must not affect and/or alter the system programming in any manner.</p> <p><u>POLICY</u></p> <p>3.0 A fire alarm permit is required to be obtained from DPS for non-emergency and emergency replacements and/or installations. If the work is emergency in nature a permit application must be made within 5 business days of the work being performed. An approved impairment plan is required for the time the system is out of service and Montgomery County Fire Code Compliance must be notified by calling 240-773-8903.</p> <p>3.1 A fire alarm system upgrade is not required, and the system shall not be required to comply with the requirements for new construction, where all of the following conditions are met:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(1) the new fire alarm control panel and/or unit is listed with all existing initiating devices,</p>	

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<p>notification appliances and equipment present;</p> <p>(2) the proposed work does not affect, add, nor remove fire alarm devices and/or associated equipment (e.g. amplifiers, local operating consoles, cabling); and</p> <p>(3) the system conforms with the minimum audibility sound pressure requirements of NFPA 72.</p> <p>Audibility testing and certification information demonstrating compliance, as detailed by Section 3.3 of this policy, must be submitted to and approved by DPS prior to requesting inspection of the fire alarm permit.</p> <p>3.2 When any addressable fire alarm components and/or devices are replaced which require programming or re-programming, a DPS Fire Alarm Permit is required.</p> <p>3.3 Prior to requesting final DPS inspection for a fire alarm permit where only the fire alarm control unit has been replaced audibility testing shall be performed throughout the building(s) served by the fire alarm system(s) and or panel(s) by a Montgomery County DPS licensed fire alarm contractor. The testing results shall be provided to and approved by DPS prior to requesting a fire alarm inspection and shall include all of the following information:</p> <p>(1) a copy of the testing party's DPS Fire Alarm Business/Contractor license;</p> <p>(2) detailed information concerning the testing methodology used to test sound pressure and audibility levels;</p> <p>(3) a certification of compliance evidencing minimum prescribed sound pressure levels of NFPA 72 have been met signed by the Fire Alarm License Designated Qualified Individual; and</p> <p>(4) calibration certificate(s) of all testing equipment used.</p> <p>3.4 Where the audibility testing required by Section 3.3 and/or requested by the DPS fire alarm inspector during acceptance testing, as appropriate, indicates the minimum sound pressure levels as prescribed by NFPA 72 are not met, revised fire alarm plans are required, and the fire alarm system must meet the requirements for new construction.</p> <p>3.5 Where new initiating devices, visible notification appliances, amplifiers and/or fire alarm pathways and/or circuits are being installed as part of a fire control panel replacement, the fire alarm system must wholly conform to the requirements of a new system of the current edition of NFPA 72 as adopted by Montgomery County and the existing occupancy chapter requirements of NFPA 101 as adopted by the Department of Permitting Services.</p> <p>3.6 Emergency replacement of the fire alarm control panel must be accompanied by submittal of a fire alarm permit to DPS not more than 5 business days after work has begun. Where practicable, a permit should be applied for prior to the work commencing.</p> <p>3.7 Where a Fire Protection Agreement or Code Modification is included as part of the proposed work, the signed agreement and all associated support documentation must accompany any permit applications made to DPS.</p> <p>3.8 Although a repair of fire alarm system beyond the fire alarm control unit may not require a permit from DPS, the system must conform to all applicable codes and or standards.</p> <p><u>RESPONSIBILITIES</u></p>	

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<p>4.0 Fire alarm work must be performed by a Montgomery County licensed fire alarm contractor.</p> <p>4.1 Permit submittals must be in accordance with the Fire Alarm Fire Alarm Submittal Requirements found here: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DPS/Resources/Files/FPCCFireAlarmPlanSubmittalReq.pdf .</p> <p>4.2 Inspections must be scheduled with DPS within 5 days of the completion of the permitted work as required in Chapter 17 of the Montgomery County Code.</p>		
Fire Alarm Upgrade Policy	Date 3/1/2024	Division Chief Rick Merck <i>Richard E. Merck</i>