



Fire Marshal's Alert!

February 23, 2006

State Fire Marshal Announces Fire Alarm Rule Changes

Please be advised that the Commissioner of Insurance, through the State Fire Marshal, has amended the Fire Alarm Rules, based on recommendations from the Fire Alarm Advisory Council. The new rules will take effect April 1, 2006. At that time, a complete copy of the statute and rules can be downloaded from the SFMO fire alarm web site at: <http://www.tdi.state.tx.us/fire/fmlialarm.html> then click on "Rules". The following is a synopsis of some of the substantive changes.

- §34.606 (8&9) **Definitions.** Definitions for "full-time" and "full-time employment" was added to clarify the requirements for a full time employee in new rule §34.613(a)(4).
- §34.607 **Adopted Standards.** The latest editions of certain standards were adopted. For example NFPA 72-2002; NFPA 70-2005; NFPA 101-2003; and 2003 edition of the International set of codes.
- §34.613(a)(4) **Applications.** At least one fulltime licensed employee must be located at each main or branch office.
- §34.613(a)(6) **Applications.** Clarifies that a firm, which contracts with a customer to provide monitoring services, but subcontracts the actual monitoring to a third party is still considered monitoring and must obtain a certificate of registration and insurance coverage for monitoring.
- §34.613(c)(2) **Applications.** Restates, the statute which permits a licensee to renew the license without being employed by a registered firm if the license hasn't expired and the licensee doesn't engage in any activity authorized by the license.
- §34.615(e) **Tests.** An applicant must complete all application requirements within one year after passing a State Fire Marshal's Office test, or they must retake the test.
- §34.616(b)(5) **Sales, Installation, Service.** Clarifies that equipment, replaced in the same location with the same or similar electrical functions and characteristics (i.e. a control panel hit by lightning or control panel upgraded to the latest technology) and determined by an APS to be listed as compatible with the existing equipment, may be considered "repair" and the entire system will not have to be upgraded to the current standards unless required by the local AHJ through their permitting process.
- §34.616(b)(6) **Sales, Installation, Service.** Requires a fire alarm servicing firm, upon request of the property owner, to provide the passwords for the fire alarm control panel, to prevent the cost of unnecessary reprogramming.
- §34.616(c)(5) **Sales, Installation, Service.** Requires a central station, retransmitting a fire alarm signal, to provide the call back number of the firm contracted to provide the monitoring service to the responding fire department on request, so the department can contact the responsible party.
- §34.616(c)(6) **Sales, Installation, Service.** Requires a monitoring firm, if terminating monitoring service before the end of the contract date, to notify the customer at least seven days before terminating the service.
- §34.617 **Certification.** Clarifies that an installation certificate (FML-009A) shall be completed not only after the installation of a system but also after an addition or modification to a fire alarm system. It also permits the SFMO installation certificate to be used in place of any other installation certificate specified in the adopted standard, unless required otherwise by the local AHJ. The proposed amendments permit a fire alarm firm to reproduce the installation certificate (FML-009A). The SFMO will no longer provide printed copies of the form. A copy must be kept in a separate file, at the firm's office, accessible to the SFMO on request. A copy no longer needs to be mailed to the SFMO. The FML-009A installation certificate is no longer needed for the installation of fire alarm systems in one to two family residences. Another method of certification is used. See §34.620 **Installation Labels.**

- §34.619 **Fire Alarm and Detection System Plans and Record Drawings.** Modifies the form and content of the record drawing stamp. A check block is used to identify if the plans are submitted for review or are record drawings. Another check block indicates whether the design complies with the applicable codes or if the design was copied from an engineering plan.
- §34.619(f) **Fire Alarm and Detection System Plans and Record Drawings.** Specifies the information that must be included on a fire alarm system plan for a one or two family residence and requires that the registered firm must retain the plan for at least one year.
- §34.620 **Installation Labels.** Modifies the installation label for a commercial system and establishes a new label for one or two family residences. The installation label for a one to two family residence includes a certification statement, signed by the licensee, certifying the system complies with the adopted standards. The previous requirement to submit the installation certificate (FML-009) is no longer required for these occupancies.
- §34.621 **Service Labels.** Modifies the format of the Service Label. Changes the color from green to white. Clarifies a Service Label shall be attached after any and all service and can be attached with another colored, (blue, yellow or red) label. Service labels shall remain on the inside of the panel for two years. Only ¼" to ½" of the adhesive, on the top back of the label, should be used and they should be attached on top of each other so an individual can flip them up and view the service identified on the previous labels. The service label includes check boxes to indicate if the service performed was general service or if the service corrected (some or all) conditions detailed on a previously attached red or yellow label.
- §34.622 **Inspection/test Labels.** (NEW LABEL) Establishes a new Inspection Label. The color is blue. The label should be attached inside the panel but may be attached outside the panel door if requested by the local AHJ. The label shall be attached after a complete, regularly scheduled, inspection/test of the fire alarm system. A check box is provided to indicate the system status. If applicable, a yellow or red label may be attached in addition to the Inspection Label. Inspection Labels shall remain on the inside or outside (as preferred by the AHJ) of the control panel for five years. Only ¼" to ½" of the adhesive, on the top back of the label, should be used. They should be attached one on top of another to permit viewing the previous system status and dates of inspections.
- §34.623 **Yellow Labels.** Adds information on the Yellow Label. Yellow Labels shall be attached to the outside of the panel. The property owner and the local AHJ shall be notified in writing, e-mail or fax within five business days after attaching the label.
- §34.624 **Red Labels.** Adds information on the Red Label. A check box is provided to indicate if the system status is either inoperable or impaired or has a fault condition. An inoperable condition shall be immediately reported to the property owner and the local AHJ and shall be confirmed in writing, e-mail or fax within the next business day. An impaired or fault condition shall be reported in writing, e-mail or fax to the property owner and the local AHJ within three business days.

The adopted NFPA standards have many changes. You are responsible to obtain a copy and install, service and maintain all fire alarm systems and devices according to these standards. . You may obtain these from NFPA at www.nfpa.org

Attached is a summary of the actual text changes to the rules.

FireMarshal@tdi.state.tx.us (e-mail) <http://www.tdi.state.tx.us/fire/fmli.html> (Web site)

State Fire Marshal's Office, Texas Department of Insurance

The Licensing Enforcement section of the State Fire Marshal's Office would like to remind you of some violations of the **current** requirements in the rules and adopted standards that we have recently observed.

1) Signs on vehicles.

Fire Alarm Rule § 34.610. Certificate of Registration

(c) Business vehicles. All vehicles regularly used in installation, service, maintenance, testing, or certification activities must prominently display the company name, telephone number, and certificate number. The numbers and letters must be at least one inch high and permanently affixed or magnetically attached to each side of the vehicle in a color contrasting with the background color of the vehicle. The certificate number must be designated in the following format: TX ACR-(number).

2) Notify AHJ PRIOR to installation and, where required, submit plans for approval.

NFPA 72 - 4.5.1 Approval and Acceptance. 4.5.1.1 The authority having jurisdiction shall be notified prior to installation or alteration of equipment or wiring. At the authority having jurisdiction's request, complete information regarding the system or system alterations, including specifications, shop drawings, battery calculations, and notification appliance circuit voltage drop calculations shall be submitted for approval.

3) Install transient protection on circuits running between buildings (i.e. underground).

NFPA 72 par. 4.4.4.3 Transient Protection. To reduce the possibility of damage by induced transients, circuits and equipment shall be properly protected in accordance with the requirements of NFPA 70, *National Electrical Code*, Article 800.

NFPA 70 art 800.90 Protective Devices.

(A) Application. ... In addition, where there exists a lightning exposure, each interbuilding circuit on a premises shall be protected by a listed primary protector at each end of the interbuilding circuit. Installation of primary protectors shall also comply with 110.3(B).

FPN No. 1: On a circuit not exposed to accidental contact with power conductors, providing a listed primary protector in accordance with this article helps protect against other hazards, such as lightning and above-normal voltages induced by fault currents on power circuits in proximity to the communications circuit.

FPN No. 2: Interbuilding circuits are considered to have a lightning exposure unless one or more of the following conditions exist:

- (1) Circuits in large metropolitan areas where buildings are close together and sufficiently high to intercept lightning.
- (2) Interbuilding cable runs of 42 m (140 ft) or less, directly buried or in underground conduit, where a continuous metallic cable shield or a continuous metallic conduit containing the cable is bonded to each building grounding electrode system.
- (3)

The above is selected portions of the NEC Code (NFPA 70). The code should be read in its entirety to comply with all its requirements and/or seek acceptable alternative requirements based on the specific materials and methods used.