

## STATE FIRE MARSHAL QUESTIONS

LAAFAA QUARTERLY MEETING JUNE 27, 2008

### **1. Please describe the process within the SFM Office once a set of submittals Arrive (receipt) through Approval.**

- a) Project is received at the SFM Office and is sent to the mail room.
- b) Project is logged in by a member of the clerical staff and a number is assigned to the project.
- c) Supervisor distributes the project to a plan reviewer's bin. Typically projects are assigned to the plan reviewer that performed the architectural review.
- d) A member of the clerical staff records into the data systems which plan reviewer is assigned the project.
- e) The plan reviewer picks up the project with other submittals and takes them back to their office.
- f) The plan reviewer briefly scans each project to verify the project is correctly assigned to him based on the data system and that the fee paid was correct based on the scope of the project. Those projects that have insufficient review fees are issued "hold letters."
- g) Since fire alarm submittals are expedited, the plan reviewer proceeds to verify that the project is associated with an architectural review. If not then the plan reviewer verifies that there is documentation explaining the scope of work. (i.e. appeal determination, fire alarm system replacement - provide date of original installation, etc...)
- h) Verify that the contractor is licensed or that his license is valid. If not, then the project is found not in compliance and the Licensing Section is notified.
- i) Verify that the project was submitted through the design professional. If not, then the project is found not in compliance without the benefit of a full review.
- j) Verify that the project complies with all requirements of NFPA 101, NFPA 72, ADA-AG and IBC in certain areas of the state that are under contract with this office to perform Louisiana State Uniform Construction Code reviews. (i.e. strobe coverage, automatic detection coverage, location pull stations, etc...)
- k) Verify that the project includes and review for compliance: Sequence of Operation, listing documentation, manufacturer's documentation and battery calculations.
- l) Identify the deficiencies on the drawings and generate the plan review letter with comments.
- m) Stamp the reviewed shop drawings and manufacturer's documentation/listing documentation/battery calculations booklet.
- n) Plan reviewer places the submittal in the clerical bin to be processed and mailed out.

### **2. Please describe the dispute process if a Contractor disagrees with a SFM Opinion.**

An important thing to remember is that if the project is required by law to have a design professional, then do not circumvent the design professional from your engagements with this office. First contact the plan reviewer/inspector to see if the issue can be resolved. If that proves to be unsuccessful, then contact the supervisor to try and resolve the issue. The next step is the appeal process that either the owner or the design professional can submit to this office. The application can be downloaded from our web site. The appeal is required to be submitted with the application and fee (\$25.00 for accessibility issues and \$100.00 for life safety issues). If that appeal is denied, then you would be able to appear before the appeals board for a determination.

- 3. On a required system that does not require Off-Site Monitoring, is it allowed to connect the system to a communicator that does not meet the requirements of a DACT? If not, why?**

There is no policy or code reference that would prohibit this, unless the non-compliant component would impair the fire alarm system from functioning. The submittal would require documentation from the owner explaining that he understands that the proposed system would consist of non-required and non-complaint components.

- 4. Under current Code Rules, only three (3) devices can be replaced on a fire alarm system. What provisions, if any, allow for the replacement of multiple (or the entire system) devices in the case of a severe lighting strike or natural disaster? What if all the devices are direct replacements? What if the replacing devices are compatible (based on Manufacturer's Specifications) with the system?**

SFM Memorandum 2000 - 16 allows for the replacement of a maximum of three fire alarm devices without an exemption submittal. During the aftermath of Katrina and Rita, this office allowed for entire systems to be replaced on conditional use of an exemption request and required a full submittal within 60 calendar days. The only time that this office does not require a submittal is if the fire alarm in question is being replaced with the same exact make and model number. This office views such work as maintenance.

- 5. During an annual fire alarm inspection, should all previous tags (green, yellow, red) be removed and replaced with the new one or should all tags remain in the stack?**

Yes, remove the old tags and give them to the owner. Place the new certification tag in the plastic sleeve on the panel. See L.A.C. 55:V:3039 F. 1.

- 6. Is it true that when a maglock is used, the "request to exit" button is to be a manual means of releasing power to the lock. The lock has to be released for a minimum of thirty seconds. The only way of accomplishing this that has been found is with the use of a pneumatic button. Is this being checked in the field?**

Door hardware that is specifically listed for releasing electromagnetic locks can be used in accordance with the conditions of **IM 2006-04** as an appropriate magnetic lock releasing device, without additional sensor(s) or button(s).

NFPA 101:7.2.1.6.2 requires the manual release device for "access-controlled egress doors" to unlock the door for not less than 30 seconds when operated. A pneumatic button proposed to perform this function is NOT acceptable unless it is listed by an independent testing laboratory for the intended purpose. Laboratory listings for all code-prescribed egress devices, such as exit buttons, sensors, locks, etc., are checked during the review process for installation requests.

- 7. Is a submittal required when you modify an Access Control System?**

Yes.

- 8. An area of an existing required fire alarm system is under renovation. During the renovation process the fire alarm circuits and devices may be removed from the construction are producing trouble conditions on the fire alarm control Panel during the duration of the project. All occupied areas of the facility still have code compliant fire alarm protection. The renovations have been submitted and approved by the SFM. Are we required to "Yellow Tag" the Control Panel?**

Yes. Note on the tag "Renovation-Under Construction" then list the trouble issues. See L.A.C. 55:V:3039 B. 2.

- 9. Is it legal for a non-Licensed Firm to bid or Quote work with the intention that they will apply for a license if they are successful?**

No. Holding oneself out to perform any licensed activity is part of the definition of Life Safety and Property Protection. Doing such without a license would be in violation of state law (R.S. 40:1664.4).

- 10. How do we address when a Fire Marshal is always using the current code when checking on replacing panels or inspecting systems without upsetting everyone? The example that comes to mind is how did you determine when the system was installed? Answer: I asked the secretary. Should they not know to look at the white tag to see the installation date? How do you suggest this without sounding smart?**

Let's discuss.

- 11. Also, when they call and ask for 4 wire smoke detector compatibility. It seems there are a select few who require some training, I would be glad to spend a day with this individual if I can accomplish it without someone getting upset. Any suggestion on the approach?**

Let's discuss.

- 12. When installing a combination fire and burglar alarm panel, is it a requirement to use fplr cable only on the fire alarm device or is it required for the security devices also?**

Based on the requirements of 72:6.8.4 - Combination Systems and the commentary of the National Fire Alarm Code Handbook, it is the opinion of this office that wiring serving non-fire alarm devices of a combination system is required to comply with the wiring methods as outlined by NFPA 70 National Electrical Code for fire alarm systems.

- 13. Is the New Orleans OFSM Satellite Office available for Fire Alarm Plan review? If yes, is it limited to review of projects in the city of New Orleans only?**

The New Orleans Satellite Office is available for fire alarm plan review where the project has no architectural work associated.

Plan review policy is that the fire alarms be reviewed by the architect who reviewed the associated architectural review, due to their familiarity with conditions on the project that may not be reflected in the fire alarm submittal. Currently, the office is not limited to the New Orleans area, and will accept plans for anywhere in the state; but understand that only one plan reviewer is manning that office and turn around time may not be faster than Baton Rouge.

- 14. Once the shop drawings have been reviewed and approved, what action (if any) is required when notification devices are relocated from the wall to ceiling (assuming the ceiling mounted device offers required coverage) or ceiling to wall?**

Please contact the reviewer. It is possible that due to the limited scope of work it might be able to be handled as correspondence in lieu of a resubmittal.

- 15. Would it be possible to go over submittal packets on fire alarms and indicate what features and characteristics our packets need to have in order for your office to provide more expeditious and efficient plan reviews? Perhaps, it would be beneficial to all those involved to see a sample of an ideal submittal packet.**

**SUMMARY OF LICENSING INVESTIGATION SECTION 2004-2008**

<b>INVESTIGATION STATISTICS</b>	<b>2004-2005 Fiscal Year</b>	<b>2005-2006 Fiscal Year</b>	<b>2006-2007 Fiscal Year</b>	<b>2007- Thru June 25, 2008</b>
Number of Investigations Received	297	425	544	636
Number of Investigations Conducted	240	319	437	500
Number of Investigations Cleared	363	396	334	388
Number of Investigations Closed	319	313	358	353
<b>INVESTIGATIONS BY TYPE</b>				
Burglar	45	99	106	112
Fire Alarm	86	88	122	154
Fire Extinguisher	40	39	49	58
Fire Suppression	11	10	14	12
Hood Suppression	37	86	44	44
Sprinkler	26	43	83	134
Locksmith	35	23	56	33
CCTV	17	22	56	63
Access Control	0	15	14	26
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>636</b>
<b>OUTCOME OF CLOSED CASES</b>				
01-Unable to Substantiate	93	86	68	94
02-Administrative Action only	30	74	147	89
03-Fine Proposed	42	92	66	103
04-Fine Proposed & Admin. Action	7	22	8	10
05-Fine Rescinded by SFM	8	10	8	12
06-Other Reasons	104	16	59	39
07-Informational Letter	35	13	2	6
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>353</b>
<b>FINES COLLECTED BY TYPE</b>				
Burglar	\$ 10,950.00	\$ 4,800.00	\$ 25,300.00	\$ 20,500.00
Fire	\$ 6,975.00	\$ 17,090.00	\$ 14,355.00	\$ 13,235.00
Sprinkler	\$ 2,100.00	\$ 4,150.00	\$ 7,800.00	\$ 7,550.00
Locksmith/CCTV	\$ 175.00	\$ 9,170.00	\$ 6,550.00	\$ 12,900.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$ 20,200.00</b>	<b>\$ 35,210.00</b>	<b>\$ 54,005.00</b>	<b>\$ 54,185.00</b>
<b>Facility Inspections Conducted</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>285</b>
<b>Building Inspections Conducted</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>86</b>