



BUREAU OF FIRE PREVENTION
FIRE ALARM INSPECTION UNIT
INFORMATION BULLETIN
No. 01-03-12



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 Issuer: Alex Spektor, Director, Fire Alarm Inspection Unit
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 Related Code Sections: Section 6.8.6.4 of NFPA 72 as Modified by Appendix BC Q106
 Purpose: Modification of Fire Alarm Signaling

The purpose of this bulletin is to clarify conditions where the evacuation signal generated by a building fire alarm system may be subject to modifications. This bulletin applies to fire alarm systems installed and approved prior to the 2008 New York Building Code.

§27-971 of the 1968 City Building Code and prior codes mandated two particular methods for audible fire alarm signaling in buildings where total evacuation of occupants is the planned and expected response:

- a) non-coded (continuous sound) alarm signal;
- b) coded alarm signal with distinctive coding to alert occupants to a fire condition and type of device that originated the alarm.

The current Building Code requires that new fire alarm systems use the temporal-three (T3) pattern (ISO 8201 and ANSI/ASA S3.41 Temporal Pattern), an international standard, for fire alarm signaling in buildings where the fire safety plan involves a total evacuation.

At the same time, the fire alarm signaling in many existing alarm systems can be modified. The T3 pattern can be generated by any type of audible notification appliances, such as a single-stroke bells, horns, or speakers. Typically, no change to the existing Fire Alarm Control Panel configuration is required. Application of the temporal-three pattern eliminates the Code Cards. This change could be easily phased in when the system requires some other alterations.

In the interest of public safety and in order to facilitate the transition to a uniform audible emergency evacuation signal in the existing buildings, the Fire Alarm Inspection Unit will implement the following operational procedures:

1. Conversion of alarm signaling in the existing approved alarm system is optional.

2. Alteration of an approved non-coded or coded fire alarm system that is limited only to modification of evacuation alarm signal shall not require any filing, submittal of plans, specifications or other documents, except as noted below.
3. Conversion of alarm signaling shall be subject to an on-site test and inspection. To obtain an inspection submit the following documentation:
 - Request for inspection (Form B-45M);
 - A copy of Letter of Approval for the existing fire alarm system;
 - An affidavit signed and sealed by the design professional (R.A., P.E.) attesting that the modified fire alarm signal conforms to the requirements of the applicable standard;
 - A notarized affidavit signed by the building owner or owner's authorized agent confirming that all principal occupants in the building recognize the temporal-three alarm tone as a signal to an immediate and total emergency evacuation.
4. Modification of alarm signaling combined with any alterations other than an ordinary repairs will require a work permit and shall be subject to Sections 2 and 3 of Bulletin 2009-022.
5. The sound level of the modified fire alarm signal shall meet the provisions of the 1968 New York City Building Code
6. Should you have any questions or if further clarification is necessary, please feel free to contact the Fire Alarm Inspection Unit Technical Support at (718) 999-2469.



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