

Testing of Fire Protection Systems and Emergency Responder Radio Amplification Systems

Code Requirements

Fire protection systems (such as fire alarms, automatic sprinkler systems standpipes) and emergency responder radio amplification systems (BDA/DAS) are among the most important components in any building for preserving lives, protecting property, and providing safety to first responders.

To ensure these systems are functional, the Fire Code requires the “responsible party” to maintain their systems in good working condition and to test their systems annually. According to the fire code, the “responsible party” is the building owner, building management company, or lease-designated person.

Fire protection systems testing – also called confidence testing – is performed by private sector technicians holding State Fire Marshal certification or, in the case of Emergency responder radio amplification systems (BDA/DAS), by qualified personnel as specified in the Sparks Fire Code. These tests are separate from the regular building inspections conducted by the Sparks Fire Department.

Beginning November 1, 2017 for fire protection systems and January 1, 2019 for emergency responder radio amplification systems (BDA/DAS), test reports must be submitted to SFD via the department’s third party vendor, The Compliance Engine at <http://www.thecomplianceengine.com>. The company performing the testing and maintenance will submit the reports on behalf of the building owner. Accurate and timely inspection reporting, combined with this new tracking capacity, will reduce false alarms and expedite the repairs of fire protection systems. It is the Sparks Fire Department’s goal that this closer partnership and

oversight of systems testing will improve life safety and protect property for all who live, visit, and conduct business in Sparks.

Testing Frequency

The responsible party, generally the building owner, must ensure that valid testing of a building’s fire protection systems and emergency responder radio amplification systems (BDA/DAS) takes place within proper intervals.

The next page of this Information Bulletin has a chart showing the test intervals for each type of system. In addition, there are secondary tests and certain maintenance processes that must be performed periodically. The intervals for secondary procedures are one, four, five, six, 10, 12, 20, and 50 years depending on the type of system or component, and are defined in national standards including NFPA 25 and NFPA 72. The testing company hired should be able to provide more information about these tests.

Certified Technicians Must Do the Testing and Maintenance

Only certified technicians are allowed to install, maintain, test, and repair fire protection systems within the City of Sparks. The Certification Unit of the State Fire Marshal’s Office administers the certification tests and issues the certificates. Emergency responder radio amplification systems (BDA/DAS) technicians are required to have specific qualifications (see section 510.5.2 of the International Fire Code). For more information on certification, access <http://www.fire.nv.gov> or call (775) 684-7520.

Tagging, Labelling and Reporting Requirements

After a fire protection system or emergency responder radio amplification system (BDA/DAS) is tested or repaired, the technician must update the service tag or label on the system to indicate its condition.



The design for labels and tags is prescribed under Fire Protection Licensing at <http://www.fire.nv.gov>.

The technician must also fill out a report showing:

- What tests and inspections were performed.
- Any deficiencies that were found.
- The technician’s evaluation of the overall condition of the system (status).

The required reporting forms are available on the State Fire Marshal’s website: <http://www.fire.nv.gov>

The Sparks Fire Code requires that the technician supply a copy of the report:

- To the responsible party on the premises- in paper or electronic copy. Reports must be maintained on the premises for a minimum of three years.
- To file at the testing company’s office.
- To SFD via the department’s third party vendor. The testing company shall ensure that the annual test report is submitted to the third party vendor’s website within 7 calendar days of the annual test. Systems that are Red Tagged shall have their test report submitted by the end of the day of the test. Additional reporting requirements can be found in the International Fire Code, Section 510 Inspection, Testing, Maintenance and Reporting Requirements for Fire Protection Systems and Emergency Responder Radio Amplification Systems.

Table 1: Required Systems Tests and Frequency

SYSTEM TYPE	TEST FREQUENCY
Fire Alarm	Annually (Optional: Quarterly for high-rise buildings)
Fire Pumps	Annually
Standpipe and/or Hose Cabinets	Five Years
Automatic Sprinklers	Annually
Emergency Generator	Annually
Smoke Control	Annually
Foam Systems	Annually and Five Years
Fire Escapes	Five Years
Alternative Automatic Fire Extinguishing System	Annually (6 months for dry chemical systems)
Commercial Cooking Rangehood Extinguishing System	Servicing required every six months
Emergency Responder Radio Amplification System (BDA/DAS)	Annually
Private Fire Hydrants	Annually

What To Do If Your System Is Not Working Properly

Repair

Any time a deficiency impairs a fire protection system or emergency responder radio amplification system (BDA/DAS), the responsible party is expected to have the damaged, failed, or defective part repaired or replaced in a timely manner.

Notify SFD

Some deficiencies (red tagged systems) are so significant that you must take additional steps. If a planned or emergency impairment is anticipated to take a system out of service for more than eight hours, the Sparks Fire Department must be notified. This notification allows the department to assess the risks and make any operational decisions necessary to ensure response-readiness

and the safety of building occupants and fire fighters.

For timelines and information on how to notify the Sparks Fire Department of impairments anticipated to last more than eight hours, call the Fire Prevention Bureau at (775) 353-2266.

Notify Other Parties

The insurance carrier, the alarm company, the building owner/manager, and/or any supervisors or tenants in the areas to be affected should also be notified of the impairment and provided with an estimate of how long the system(s) might be out-of-service. These same parties should be notified when the system is returned to service.

Selecting a Contractor for Testing and Repairs

The responsible party is ultimately responsible for ensuring a State Fire Marshal certified technician for fire protection systems or a qualified person for emergency responder radio amplification systems (BDA/DAS) does the testing and makes any subsequent repairs. The Sparks Fire Department cannot make a specific recommendation about what testing company to use.

To check that a specific technician has current certifications for your type of fire protection system, call the State Fire Marshal Division, Fire Protection Licensing Department at (775) 684-7526.

Compliance

The responsible party may receive a notice of violation (NOV) from the Sparks Fire Department requiring repair to the system(s) to correct deficiencies specified on the inspection report if those deficiencies have not been corrected. The NOV will establish a date for compliance. If the fire department contacts you again after the NOV has been issued, and you have not made the corrections, your file will be turned over to the Sparks Fire Marshal. A Fire Inspector will be

assigned to conduct a fire inspection, and current inspection fees will apply.