

Seattle Fire Prevention Division

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Required Unit Testing and Inspections – Fire Alarms and Sprinklers

Annual Sprinkler Inspections

Section 5.1 of NFPA 25 requires a complete walkthrough of the building and a visual inspection of every accessible sprinkler head and other system component, from floor level. All sprinkler heads require visual inspection except those in concealed spaces. A partial inspection that visually inspects some but not all accessible sprinkler heads would not constitute an NFPA 25 compliant inspection and is not accepted by the Seattle Fire Department. Inspection and testing companies find that proper notice to the tenants by email or physical posting in a common area can be helpful.

Annual or Quarterly Fire Alarm Inspections

NFPA 14.3.1 requires all fire alarm devices to be tested annually, with very limited exceptions. In general, the test is not considered completed until all the devices have been tested (or for buildings with quarterly testing, the final report for the year is not complete until 100% of devices requiring testing have been tested). Inspection and testing companies find that proper notice to the tenants by email or physical posting in a common area can be helpful.

COVID Updates and Re-Opening

Under the Governor's Safe Start for Re-Opening, testing and maintenance of fire protection systems in buildings should continue with safe worksite practices.

- **100% complete** test reports must be submitted timely (within 7 days of date of test, except for impairments/critical deficiencies, which must be submitted on the same day). Please reserve yellow tags for deficiencies, not incomplete tests, except in the case when a testing company has made multiple inspection visits with proper notice and is unable to gain compliance with testing access due to building owner lack of cooperation.
- **SFD now allows testing companies to perform video or photographic inspections** of unit devices in situations when SFD-certified technicians believe they are able to verify functionality using those means.
- **A single non-renewable extension of up to 3 months** will be provided per property if there is a public health reason to defer testing in a portion of an occupancy. However thereafter the building owner must work with the testing company to complete required testing or repairs. To request an extension please email the specific circumstances to SFD_FMO_SystemsTesting@seattle.gov.
- **Impairments/critical deficiencies** must be resolved promptly and will not receive any extension.
- Inspection and testing companies must follow the Governor's Safe Start Guidelines to protect employees and customers: <https://www.governor.wa.gov/issues/issues/covid-19-resources/covid-19-reopening-guidance-businesses-and-workers>.