

Seattle Fire Prevention Division

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Fire Alarm Panel Replacement

Permitting and Plan Review

Fire alarm panel replacements require a permit from the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections. The most typical permit is an SDCI over the counter permit for FA<7 devices. Unless required by the Seattle Fire Department, panel replacement permits are not routed for SFD Plan Review. The contractor is required to ensure the project meets Seattle Fire Code and NFPA 72.

Impairments and Fire Watch

A fire watch is required whenever fire alarm panels in existing buildings are out of service, with limited exceptions in SFD [Administrative Rule 9.04](#). SFD must be notified following the planned or emergency [impairment notification process](#) whenever a fire alarm system will be offline for more than 8 hours.

Contractor Pre-Test Requirements

When replacing a fire alarm panel, the installing contractor shall complete pre-testing of the items in NFPA 72 Table 14.4.3.2 items 2(a) and 2(d). Panel replacement project pre-testing must be performed prior to the SFD inspection but is not required to be reported to SFD using the Acceptance Test form in The Compliance Engine.

SFD Inspections

Fire alarm panel replacements require SFD inspection. SFD straight time inspection fees are charged by SDCI through the Accela/Seattle Services Portal at the time the contractor pays for the permit. Panel replacements conducted on overtime have an additional SFD OT inspection charge.

At the time of inspection, SFD inspectors will witness a 10% functional test of the system, or an acceptable representative sample of the system, including at least one device on each circuit and 100% of all new devices added.

If the inspector observes failures while witnessing the 10% representative sample, the inspector can require the contractor to correct them immediately, or if immediate correction is not possible in the time "booked" for the inspection, the customer can be required to schedule a re-inspection at a future date.

Based on the number of failures observed during the 10% testing, the inspector can require additional device testing, up to a full acceptance test at that time, or fail the inspection and require an inspection a future date to allow SFD to witness a full system test. If the inspector determines in their judgment that the inspection failed due to a lack of required pre-testing, the failed inspection fee will be charged.

Meet Code Standards at Time of Original Installation

Replacing a fire alarm panel in an existing building generally does not require system upgrades if the fire alarm system continues to meet the code requirements of the code the fire alarm system was originally installed under (exception: where required by Fire Marshal). Contractors shall conduct testing to verify the system performance meets the code standards in effect at time of original installation.