

KSFM 2024 - 013 - KSFM Prevention Information Release

To: All Kansas Schools

Date: October 24, 2024

Subject: Fire Alarm Systems in Schools

Inspectors from the Kansas State Fire Marshal's Office (KSFM) have begun annual inspections in Kansas schools. There have been several instances that inspectors have found impaired fire alarm systems in these buildings, which compromises student and staff safety. KSFM would like to remind schools that fire alarm systems are essential to providing a safe learning environment and impairments to the fire alarm system can result in delayed notification in the event of a fire, leading to potential injury or even death.

International Fire Code requires installation of a fire alarm system complying with NFPA 72, *National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code*, in all educational occupancies.

Fire alarm systems consist of initiating devices (smoke or heat detectors, manual pull stations) and notification devices (horn/strobe units or voice communication systems). The purpose of the fire alarm system is to provide early detection of a fire and notify building occupants to evacuate. It is essential that all components be fully functional to ensure the fire alarm system performs as intended. If any component of the fire alarm system is impaired, a trouble message will appear on the fire alarm panel. If the system is impaired, the building must either be evacuated, or a compensatory measure, such as a fire watch, must be initiated.

If your fire alarm panel is showing a trouble message or is otherwise impaired, the following steps must be taken:

1. Contact your fire alarm company to schedule service to correct the issue.
2. Initiate a fire watch in accordance with the requirements outlined in [Fire Fact 85](#). The fire watch must be conducted at all times the building is occupied and must remain in place until the system is fully operational and KSFM has approved ending the fire watch.
3. Notify KSFM that you have initiated a fire watch.

Fire alarm systems are also subject to a routine inspection, testing and maintenance program. This includes annual and semi-annual inspections by a qualified fire safety company. Fire alarm panels are installed in an area that is staffed during operating hours so that staff can periodically observe the panel and ensure that the system is in normal operating status. Staff should also visually observe components during their daily routines and notify appropriate personnel if any components appear to be damaged or otherwise non-functional.

Following the required maintenance schedules, and instituting appropriate compensatory measures during impairments, will ensure that our students are in the safest possible environment for learning and growing.

For questions and to assist you in complying with the requirements, the KSFM has a section on its website devoted to Schools. Please visit <https://firemarshal.ks.gov/213/Pre-K-through-12-Schools> for more information

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