

# FIRE ALARM CONTROL PANEL REPLACEMENT PLAN REVIEW AND PERMIT REQUIREMENTS



Town of Brighton  
Office of the Fire Marshal

MAY 2020

# Fire Alarm Control Panel Replacement Plan Review and Permit Requirements

## Purpose

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The purpose of developing comprehensive guidelines is to establish a procedure for fire alarm system repairs and replacements.

## Scope

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The guidelines in this administrative bulletin shall apply to existing buildings with an existing fire alarm systems where a fire alarm control unit is proposed to be replaced.

## Definitions

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Unless otherwise expressly stated, the following definitions shall, for the purposes of this administrative bulletin, have the meanings as defined below.

**Repair and Replacement** shall be defined as the necessary corrections to achieve compliance as specified in the referenced standards.

**Emergency Replacement** – When the fire alarm system is out of service due to a failure of a fire alarm control unit that cannot be repaired. (Fire watch is required for the time the system is out of service).

**Required Replacement** – When expansion of the existing fire alarm system is required due to tenant improvement, elevator upgrade, etc., and the existing fire alarm system is not capable of supporting the required expansion.

**Voluntary Replacement** – The replacement of an existing fire alarm control unit when the existing fire alarm system is still functioning as originally designed and installed (Not a required replacement).

**Additions, alterations, repairs, rehabilitations or changes of occupancy** shall be permitted to any existing structure or service system without requiring the existing systems to comply with all requirements of the current technical codes. All new work shall conform to the requirements of the technical codes for new construction. For any portion of an existing building or service system which creates a hazard or unsafe condition, the Chief Fire Marshal shall determine the extent to which that portion of the existing building or service system is to be upgraded to conform to the requirements of either the Existing Buildings Code of New York State or the technical codes.

**Maintenance** shall be defined as the periodic testing, cleaning, adjustment, and operation required to ensure that the system will operate as specified in the referenced standards.

**FACP** is defined as Fire Alarm Control Panel

## Where Required

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The following is the policy of the Office of the Fire Marshal - Town of Brighton when a fire alarm control unit is proposed to be replaced:

1. A Town of Brighton - Office of the Fire Marshal Fire Code Operational Permit is required for any work on a fire alarm system that changes the fire alarm system's coverage, diminishes the fire alarm system's performance, or alters the fire alarm system's original approved design.
2. Where the existing fire alarm control unit is replaced with a fire alarm control unit of a different manufacturer or utilizing devices of a different technology, the existing initiating devices and conductors may be replaced on a one-for-one basis in the existing locations, provided those devices had been installed in accordance with their listings and location(s) at time of installation, for compatibility with the new fire alarm control unit.

The Office of the Fire Marshal considers this work to be "new" and all current visibility and audibility requirements throughout the entire building must be met.

3. If the new fire alarm control unit is listed to be compatible with all the existing initiation, notification and control devices, no further upgrade is required.
4. If the existing devices are not listed to be compatible with the new fire alarm control unit, the fire alarm system must be brought up to current code and shall meet the requirements of the 2016 Edition of NFPA 72.
5. **Like for Like replacement.** Replacing a device or alarm panel with the same model number, manufactured by the same manufacturer. In the case of a model being discontinued, use the model identified as a replacement for the previous model by the same manufacturer  
*(ex. Fire lite MMX-1 replaces Fire lite MMX). Where a replacement model is not available, then a suitable device can be selected from the FACP equipment manufacturer's compatibility list in the installation manual.*
6. The replacement of a fire alarm control unit, necessary to support construction improvements within a portion of a building, shall also not retroactively require a complete fire alarm system upgrade.
7. Minor expansion to the fire alarm system such as the addition of circuits or modules to monitor existing supervisory conditions (existing system that utilize a trouble signal only to monitor the supervisory conditions), addition of an initiation device circuit or circuits, (where typically accomplished by installing a zone card in an unused slot, or adding a zone circuit board to the control unit), fire sprinkler control valve monitoring or the installation of a smoke detector at the fire alarm control unit location, etc, shall not retroactively require a complete fire alarm system upgrade.

## Intent

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1. Existing fire alarm control units that are failing and cannot be repaired, due to obsolescence, catastrophic failure, limited capacity, etc., must be replaced immediately in order to provide the building with a functional fire alarm system.
2. Where a required fire alarm system is out of service, a fire watch shall be required in accordance with FCNYS Section 901.7. Fire watch personnel and procedures shall be approved by the Chief Fire Marshal and shall be in accordance with the aforementioned section.
3. Existing fire alarm systems which do not meet current building and fire codes, and are functioning as originally designed and installed, are not required to be upgraded to meet current codes. However, if these systems are out of service due to a fire alarm control unit failure, and the new fire alarm control unit is not listed to be compatible with the existing devices, the existing fire alarm system no longer functions as originally designed and installed, a code compliant fire alarm system shall be installed.

Since a new upgraded fire alarm system is now required, the Office of the Fire Marshal - Town of Brighton policy requires the new fire alarm system to meet current code requirements and properly notify all building occupants in the event of an emergency.

## Approval Process for Fire Alarm Control Unit emergency replacement

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1. Applicant shall apply for a fire code operational permit for a fire alarm control unit emergency replacement. Plans shall be provided with the permit application, or when approved, may be submitted as as-builts, to document device compatibility and locations, prior to final approval.
2. The applicant shall submit cut sheets and listing sheets to show that both the new and existing fire alarm control units are listed as compatible with the existing devices. The make and model numbers of all devices shall be included with the application form.
3. A field inspection with Office of the Fire Marshal - Town of Brighton personnel and the applicant may be scheduled, to verify status of the existing control unit, existing devices, and need for a fire watch.
4. If the inspection fails for compatibility reasons, the applicant/owner shall upgrade the system to current codes.

## Additional Information

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1. For a fire alarm control unit emergency replacement permit application, only the control unit is permitted to be replaced. Other FA system components such as initiating devices, notification appliances or control and monitor modules, are not permitted to be replaced nor to be added to the system.
2. When new additional smoke detectors are required to be installed for elevator recall purposes (upon elevator modernization work), they shall be connected to the existing fire alarm control unit if the building is provided with a required fire alarm system. These new detectors are required to be listed with the existing fire alarm control unit.
3. If the building is not required to be provided with a building fire alarm system, smoke detectors for elevator recall shall be connected to a dedicated fire alarm control unit.
4. If the building is provided with an existing required fire alarm system with a control unit that is not capable of supporting the additional elevator recall smoke detectors, unless otherwise approved, a dedicated function fire alarm control unit is not permitted to be installed and monitored by the existing fire alarm control unit. The existing fire alarm system shall be replaced with a system that meets the requirements of the 2016 Edition of NFPA 72.
5. When the replacement of a fire alarm control unit requires that the entire system be upgraded to current code under the provisions outlined above, the building owner may be granted an extension of time to upgrade the system on a case by case basis. A written plan of action that is signed by the owner of the building and outlines the proposed timelines for installation must be submitted to and approved by the Office of the Fire Marshal - Town of Brighton prior to issuance of the fire code operational permit for fire alarm control unit replacement.
6. The authority having jurisdiction shall be consulted prior to the replacement of any fire alarm control unit or system modification, which shall include complete documentation in accordance with of the 2016 Edition of NFPA 72, Fire Code of New York and Town of Brighton requirements.

## Please read the information below and sign before submitting your application

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Your application shall be deemed complete only if this information package is reviewed and application completed and submitted. Accuracy of the submittal package, including knowledge and understanding of this information package, is the responsibility of the applicant.

Failure to submit an accurate submittal package will be considered an incomplete application by the Plan Reviewer. An incomplete submittal will result in a **HOLD**.

If work is found to have commenced without approved plans and/or a proper permit, this office reserves the right to shut down any/all portions of the entire project deemed necessary to inspect, investigate and confirm that work has been done.

All installations and/or operations must concur with the approved plans. Any deviation from the approved plans requires a re-submittal to the Office of the Fire Marshal. If changes, alteration or deviation from the approved plans are not submitted for review and approval prior to final inspection by the Office of the Fire Marshal, then the installation **permit fees immediately double**.

When work for which a permit is required has been conducted without a permit or approval, a stop work is immediately posted and all **permit fees immediately double** upon proper application for plan review and due upon issuance of an new installation permit

If any portion of the work performed is not clearly visible or readily accessible, you will be ordered to demolish, disassemble or remove any and all obstructions regardless of the cost incurred. Failure to comply will result in the suspension/revocation of any building or other permits related to the site.

In addition, it is understood that the installation of fire protection systems shall be made only by persons properly trained and qualified to install the specific fire protection system being provided. The installer shall certify to this authority that the installation is in complete agreement with the terms of the listing and manufacturer's instructions and/or approved design plan.