



GUIDANCE FOR MAINTAINING FIRE PROTECTION AND LIFE SAFETY SYSTEMS REGARDLESS OF OCCUPANCY STATUS

As government officials across the globe issue travel directives and ask non-essential employees to work remotely during the pandemic, once fully-occupied buildings are near vacant or dramatically underused. The National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA®), a global leader in fire, life and electrical safety, is urging officials to ensure that fire protection and life safety systems be maintained in all commercial and multi-occupancy residential buildings throughout the global pandemic. NFPA further urges that the personnel and vendors that service those systems be deemed essential.

In order to avoid exasperating the current environment by compromising fire and life safety, and leaving buildings vulnerable to vandalism, NFPA recommends the following:

- » All commercial and multi-occupancy residential buildings should maintain fully operational fire and life safety systems as required by the applicable codes and standards. (NFPA 25, NFPA 72®, NFPA 101®)
- » Those responsible for these buildings should adhere to the expected schedules for inspection, testing, and maintenance (ITM) that are vital to their operation. If they are unable to do so, they should contact their local authority having jurisdiction.
- » Public and private employees who perform the inspection, maintenance, and other responsibilities for these systems should be deemed essential workers.
- » Most ITM requirements can be executed by a single ITM service provider limiting the need for face-to-face interaction. Where two individuals are required to perform an ITM task, the majority of these tasks can be accomplished over two-way radio.

- » Systems on construction sites that are being temporarily abandoned should remain in an operating condition as specified in the construction safety plan (NFPA 241).
- » Doors in fire-protection rated construction and smoke barriers are passive systems within the building fire safety program. Blocking open smoke or fire-protection rated doors can compromise the integrity of a building's compartmentation plan. Maintaining these opening protectives is critical, especially in health care occupancies. (NFPA 80)
- » ITM requirements for health care systems, including med-gas systems, that require ITM as outlined by the risk assessment performed for the building and in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations should continue. (NFPA 99)
- » Emergency power systems are integral to building operation during emergency events (fire and power loss) and the ITM requirements. Without emergency power systems in proper working order, fire alarm systems may not work as intended. (NFPA 110)

RELEVANT NFPA CODES AND STANDARDS

- NFPA 25, Standard for the Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems
- NFPA 72®, *National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code*®
- NFPA 80, *Standard for Fire Doors and Other Opening Protectives*
- NFPA 99, *Health Care Facilities Code*
- NFPA 101®, *Life Safety Code*®
- NFPA 105, *Standard for Smoke Door Assemblies and Other Opening Protectives*
- NFPA 110, *Standard for Emergency and Standby Power Systems*
- NFPA 241, *Standard for Safeguarding Construction, Alteration, and Demolition Operations*

This guidance and more information from NFPA on COVID-19 can be found at a dedicated page on the NFPA website.