




OCEAN CITY FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE
301 Baltimore Avenue, Ocean City, MD 21842
410-289-8780

MEMORANDUM

Subject: Guidance for existing fire alarm system repairs and modifications	Memo #: 2019-001 - Amended
	Effective: November 19, 2020
Authority: Deputy Chief Josh Bunting, Fire Marshal 	Internal (FMO Staff)

The following guidance related to existing fire alarm systems is provided to clarify requirements for fire alarm panel replacements and system modifications to aide staff in providing consistent information to contractors and building owners:

A. Fire Alarm Panel Replacements

1. Fire Alarm Panels shall be permitted to be replaced on a one-for-one basis without upgrading the remaining individual fire alarm system components, contingent upon the new fire alarm panel's compatibility with all other system notification and initiating devices.
2. Where the new fire alarm panel is only compatible with portions of the existing fire alarm system, those existing fire alarm devices that must be replaced shall be permitted to be replaced on a one-for-one basis.
3. Where the fire alarm audibility in the occupancy is not of a level sufficiently heard above ambient conditions (15dB above ambient), provisions shall be made to upgrade the audibility / occupant notification of the fire alarm system, subject to the requirements applicable to the existing occupancy.

B. Fire Alarm System Modifications

1. Additions / Repairs / Modifications shall be permitted to be made on a one-for-one basis with the existing system, contingent upon compatibility of the replacement devices with the existing system. Those existing fire alarm devices that must be replaced due to compatibility shall be permitted to be replaced on a one-for-one basis.
2. Those devices added as an extension of an existing system (throughout a building addition or other building rehabilitation area) shall be compatible with the existing system and shall meet the requirements applicable to a new installation.
3. A complete fire alarm system replacement shall meet the requirements applicable to the existing occupancy, or where required as part of a rehabilitation work area, shall meet the requirements for a new installation.
4. Where the fire alarm audibility in the occupancy is not of a level sufficiently heard above ambient conditions (15dB above ambient), provisions shall be made to upgrade the audibility / occupant notification of the fire alarm system, subject to the requirements applicable to the existing occupancy.

Where conditions require the unforeseen upgrade of certain system components, a phase-in plan may be considered by this office on a case by case basis, subject to approval of the Fire Marshal.