



A Tradition of Stewardship  
A Commitment to Service

Napa County Fire Department  
Fire Marshal's Office  
1125 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Napa, CA 94558

Office: (707) 299-1464  
Direct: (707) 299-1466

Adam Mone  
Fire Plans Examiner

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## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** 4/14/2020

**SUBJECT:** Fire Alarm Communicator Upgrade Permits

The fire code requires that most fire detection and suppression systems be electronically monitored offsite for alarms and impairments (2019 California Fire Code Section 907.6.6, 903.4.1 and 904.3.5).

The NFPA 72 standard has changed over time to include new communications technologies. The standard has also been modified to address changes within existing technologies (2016 NFPA 72 Section 26.6).

When a telecommunications provider decommissions a network based upon a given technology, large numbers of fire systems can be affected. In some cases, this has happened faster than the local alarm service providers were able address the issues. Telecommunications providers are expected to decommission several networks over the next few years. (POTS network, 3G and 4G cellular system sunsets)

Where an existing fire protection system is modified, a permit is required (2019 California Fire Code Section 105.1.1)

To encourage a timely transition away from obsolete technologies, the Napa County Fire Marshal's Office is offering a new process for "Fire Alarm Communicator Upgrade Permits". This process may be used for both voluntary upgrades and emergency repairs as described in 2019 California Fire Code Section 105.1.4. *Where additional time is not required to address excessive problems associated with the permit*, fees from the Fire Marshal's Office will reflect ½ hour of the current hourly rate.

The process is as follows:

- 1) Permits are to be submitted electronically by a licensed C-10 contractor
- 2) The scope of the permit is to be limited to the changing of the communicator and if required the addition of a smoke detector above the unit in accordance with 2016 NFPA 72 Section 10.4.4
- 3) The documents submitted for permit do not require complete system drawings but do require:
  - a) A scope of work including the premises address, the make and model of the existing Fire Alarm Control Unit, the make and model of the communicator to be installed
  - b) The cut sheet and CSFM listing for the equipment to be installed
  - c) Battery calculations
  - d) A statement certifying that the installation will conform to the requirements of the current California Fire Code and NFPA 72
  - e) A signed contractors stamp
- 4) In lieu of an inspection by the Fire Marshal's Office, the contractor will provide a letter certifying that the permitted scope of work (provide permit #) has been completed and that the system as a whole is operating and being maintained in accordance with the requirements of NFPA 72.