

Seattle Fire Prevention Division

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It's the Law: Building Owners Must Test and Maintain Fire Protection Systems

Fire protection systems including fire alarms, sprinklers and suppression systems are among the most important components in any building for preserving lives, protecting property, and enhancing firefighter safety. The Fire Code requires the "responsible party" to maintain their systems in good working condition and to test their systems annually. The "responsible party" is the building owner, building management company, or lease-designated person.

Fire protection systems testing — also called confidence testing — is performed by private sector technicians holding Seattle Fire Department (SFD) certifications or, in the case of emergency responder radio amplification systems (BDA/DAS), by qualified personnel as specified in the Seattle Fire Code.

Many buildings in Seattle have appropriately maintained fire protection systems. However, there are thousands of buildings with untested or unrepaired fire protection systems in Seattle, which puts lives and property at risk. SFD has worked hard to notify building owners to encourage them to voluntarily comply, making over 50,000 attempted contacts by letter, phone, email and in person in the past 12 months. Beginning January 1, 2020, SFD will begin writing citations when fire protection systems are not maintained or when companies fail to submit testing and maintenance reports to SFD.

Systems Testing Citations and Penalties - \$373 for first violation

- Failure to Test or Maintain Fire Protection Systems. This citation is written to the building owner/responsible party.
- Failure to Report Testing and Maintenance Timely. This citation is written to the company performing the testing.

Resources to Help Building Owners

- SFD will send you a reminder notice 30 days before your system is due for testing, and another notice when it is past due, or when deficiencies have been found. To help customers transition to the new program, the Fire Marshal will not issue a citation on our first inspection at your property, during the initial implementation phase. However, if SFD re-inspects and the violation has not been resolved, the citation will be written.
- SFD Client Assistance Memorandum [#5971 Testing of Fire Protection Systems and Emergency Responder Radio Amplification Systems](#) provides information about selecting a company to perform the testing.
- If you are taking affirmative steps toward addressing your violation, SFD may be able to extend compliance timelines. Please contact us at SFD_FMO_SystemsTesting@seattle.gov.

Resources to Help Inspection, Testing and Maintenance Companies

- SFD has been sending you quarterly statistics on your company's report submittal timelines so you have the data to compare your company's performance against the legally required submittal timelines.
- To provide a "grace period" to help customers transition, during the initial quarter of 2020 the Fire Marshal intends the Fire Marshal will issue one citation per testing company, instead of one citation per late report.

Appeals Citations may be appealed at a hearing in front of the City's Hearing Examiner, if an appeals hearing is requested by writing within 15 days of the date the citation was mailed/served.

For more information, please contact us at SFD_FMO_SystemsTesting@seattle.gov. Thank you for your partnership with Seattle Fire in helping to preserve lives and protect property for all who live, visit, and do business in Seattle.