



Canadian Fire Alarm Association
CFAA • ACAI
Association Canadienne d'Alarme Incendie

April 3, 2020

Bulletin

To: Canadian Fire Alarm Association Members & Registered Technicians
Subject: Recommendations Regarding COVID-19 Protocols for Testing & Inspection of Fire Alarm Systems in Buildings

CFAA's mission is to "maximize the effectiveness and use of fire alarm systems in the protection of life and property in Canada."

This bulletin is intended to help you to continue our mission and vision as we go forward under the constraints put on us during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CFAA and many government agencies consider the inspection and testing as well as repair work provided by our members to be an "essential" service when buildings are either empty or fully occupied. These are both conditions that cause buildings to be operated outside their normal design and operating parameters.

During this pandemic period, residential buildings may be fully occupied with "stay at home" directives issued by government. Commercial and industrial buildings may be empty or have few staff onsite. An empty building still has active electrical and mechanical systems that are not under supervision.

We recognize and fully endorse the need to keep you, your clients and the public safe from the spread of the virus. While ensuring that there is complete adherence with provincial and municipal government directions regarding COVID-19, CFAA members need to work with the fire services, building owners, managers and occupants to develop safe processes for conducting fire testing and inspections in buildings.

The Association understands that each case may be different and as such is providing the following guidance to our members consistent with messages already provided by government authorities. This guidance includes:

- Maintaining safe distances of 2 meters from others (between technicians and between technicians and building occupants), and
- Working with the local Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ), building operators and occupants to develop means to provide appropriate testing while observing spatial distancing, and
- Providing testing during times when it may be most appropriate, and
- Technicians should protect themselves with the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). It is important to be educated and avoid misinformation regarding PPE use. CFAA encourages that you visit your Provincial Ministry of Health or [Health Canada Guidelines Workplaces](#) websites regularly for the most updated information.

Most Provincial Fire Codes reference ULC Standard S536: *Inspection and Testing of Fire Alarm Systems*. This Standard includes requirements that recognize some devices may not be accessible and makes provisions for identifying and documenting the particular condition. Where a satisfactory and safe approach to testing a device cannot be achieved, that device should qualify as an inaccessible device during an inspection, under COVID-19 conditions. It should be documented on your inspection report.

For example, if you, a property manager or homeowner do not consider access to a condominium or apartment for in-suite device testing to be safe, then the subject devices would be identified as inaccessible. This is permitted by the standard, and testing of each device would be required at least once every two years.

We feel it is important to continue to provide our essential services without delay where fire alarm testing and inspections can be conducted safely, while also ensuring complete adherence to provincial and municipal directions regarding COVID-19.

It is therefore important that fire service companies work with the building owner/operators to determine how best to proceed with testing and inspection under the restraints of COVID-19 procedures. If you are denied access to a building by a building owner or manager, it is recommended to contact the local fire services for further direction.

For ongoing updates related to COVID-19 situation please refer to the CFAA website at www.cfaa.ca.