

Fire Alarm Guidelines for Existing R-1 Apartments and Condominiums on Bainbridge Island

The following guidelines have been developed to provide a clear understanding of specific requirements as related to the new enhanced safety requirements for existing apartment and condominium buildings. It is understood that unique conditions may exist in some buildings that could require special considerations by the Fire Department.

The Level I, II, and III building requirements, as adopted by Kitsap County, do not apply for the City of Bainbridge Island. Bainbridge Island has established two categories; “lower risk” and “higher risk”. The lower risk buildings are one and two stories in height with 5 or more units. The higher risk buildings are 3 or more stories in height with 5 or more units. The deadline for installation of fire alarm systems as required by ordinance is September 25, 2003.

Fire Alarm Systems:

1. A fire alarm system shall be installed in all higher risk buildings with common interior corridors and stairways. The system shall consist of the following:
 - a. Smoke detectors in the common corridors spaced according to manufacturers specifications.
 - b. A heat detector inside each dwelling unit.
 - c. Audible device/s in each dwelling unit.
 - d. Manual pull stations at each exit on all floor levels.

2. A fire alarm system shall be installed in all higher risk buildings with direct exiting to an exterior balcony or stairway (no interior corridors or stairways). The system shall consist of the following:
 - a. Manual pull stations at each exit on all floor levels.
 - b. Audible device/s in each dwelling unit.
 - c. A heat detector inside each dwelling unit is optional.

Single Station Smoke Detectors: All targeted buildings require installation of photoelectric type detectors in all sleeping areas and corridors outside of the sleeping areas. In addition, all detectors over 10 years old must be replaced.

Manual Fire Alarm Pull Stations: Manual pull stations are required to be installed at each exit on all floor levels. Due to certain building configurations this requirement may be modified in some cases.

Heat Detectors: Heat detectors are required to be installed only in buildings with common interior corridors or stairways. The heat detectors may be located just inside the entrance door to the dwelling unit or other locations as approved.

Alarm Indicating Devices: Audible devices shall be provided in each dwelling unit and located such that audibility in the sleeping rooms shall not be less than 70 decibels with the doors closed. A visual strobe shall be located on the exterior of the building near the main entrance or address numbers, whichever applies. It shall be incumbent upon the fire alarm contractor to use calibrated sound measurement equipment to verify that the decibel requirement is in compliance.

Monitoring: All fire alarm systems will require monitoring by a U.L. listed central station. This will require two phone lines. One line must be dedicated the other line may be a common building phone line such as an office fax line. If there is no common building phone line for this purpose, then two new phone lines must be installed.

Fire Alarm Panel: The fire alarm panel must be an addressable type utilizing “smart detectors” so each device is a separate zone. The panel shall be located at the main entrance to the building or in a remote location with an annunciator at the main entrance.

Permits and Inspections: All fire alarm systems must be reviewed and approved by the Fire Department. Three sets of plans shall be submitted to the City Building Department which will be forwarded to the Fire Department for approval. The permit fees have been waived. An electrical permit is still required from the Department of Labor and Industries. Standard acceptance tests are required.

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