



**CITY OF FALLS CHURCH
FIRE MARSHAL**
300 PARK AVENUE
FALLS CHURCH, VA 22046
Phone: (703) 248-5058 Fax: (703) 248-5158
Email: FireMarshal@fallschurchva.gov



EFFECTIVE DATE - APRIL 11, 2011

TO: Building Owners, Managers and Fire Protection Companies
FROM: Tom Polera, Fire Marshal
SUBJECT: Requirements for Existing Structures with Fire Protection Systems

The City of Falls Church Fire Marshal would like to advise all building owners/managers and all fire protection service companies performing work in the City of Falls Church of the requirements for structures with existing fire protection systems. Fire Prevention inspections will now be conducted by the City of Falls Church Fire Marshal; previously this was conducted by the Arlington County.

FIRE INSPECTIONS: Effective immediately, all buildings in the City of Falls Church equipped with any fire protection system, which may include fire alarms, sprinklers, fire department standpipes and fire pumps are required to be inspected on an annual basis. This inspection will focus on the core and shell of the building with access to all areas of storage, mechanical, and equipment rooms. Inspection of tenant spaces will depend on occupancy classification and will typically not be inspected. Tenant spaces with fire protection systems not associated with the building, such as restaurant hood suppression systems, will be handled as a separate inspection between the Fire Marshal and the tenant.

TESTING OF FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS BY CONTRACTORS: Periodic inspections and testing of all fire protection systems (alarms and suppression) shall be in accordance with respective NFPA standards and other codes as required under the Statewide Fire Prevention Code and the City of Falls Church Fire Prevention Code. The building owners/management shall be responsible to assure third party contractors are licensed, insured sufficiently and eligible to transact business in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Additionally, all companies shall follow NFPA standards and shall be NICET (National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies) certified in the inspection, testing and maintenance of fire alarm systems and water based fire protection systems.

REPORTING TO THE FIRE MARSHAL: The City of Falls Church Fire Marshal shall be notified in advance when system testing or maintenance is scheduled. Notification can be made by emailing FireMarshal@fallschurchva.gov or leaving a message at (703) 248-5058. Currently, it is not required for the Fire Marshal to witness the third party contractor testing.

It is the responsibility of the fire protection company and the building owner/management to report all test results/maintenance reports to the City Fire Marshal within 30 days of the test.

FEES AND PERMITS: Fees for conducting inspections, re-inspections, and reviewing documentation of contractor test results will be assessed at a rate of \$130 per hour. In instances of continued non-compliance this inspection rate will double.

Additionally, the fire prevention code requires permits based upon the use and occupancy of a structure. Permits are required for places of assembly (greater than 50), swimming pools, temporary tents (over 50 persons), hazardous material use and storage (depending on the quantity), performing hot work or welding, open burning, use of explosives, performing a certified fireworks display to name a few. Permit fees, where applicable are in addition to the hourly billing rate. Please contact the City Fire Marshal for specific questions on permit requirements related to the Fire Prevention Code.

PROCEDURE FOR COMPLIANCE WITH THE FIRE CODE

- 1. If more than 12 months since your last fire alarm and fire suppression system test, contact your third party contractor to schedule immediately.**
- 2. Have a copy of all system test results from the fire protection company available for the Fire Marshal.**
- 3. Contact the City of Falls Church Fire Marshal at FireMarshal@fallschurchva.gov or by calling (703) 248-5058 to schedule your annual inspection.**

When performing testing or maintenance of a fire alarm or fire protection system, the building owner/management is required by state and city code to contact:

- City of Falls Church Fire Marshal (703) 248-5058**
- Arlington County Emergency Dispatch Center (703) 741-3011**

In conclusion, the focus of the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code and the City of Falls Church Fire Prevention Code is the promotion of life safety, fire prevention and the regulation in the use and operation of hazardous materials. Penalties upon conviction of violating the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code are set out in Section 27-100 of the Code of Virginia.

Questions regarding the procedures and clarification may be directed to the City of Falls Church Fire Marshal at FireMarshal@fallschurchva.gov or calling (703) 248-5058.

