

INTERPRETIVE MEMORANDUM 2001 - 2

To: Licensed Architects
Licensed Engineers
Licensed Sprinkler Contractors
Licensed Fire Alarm Contractors
Felicia Cooper, Administrator - Inspections
Stephen Gogreve, Manager
Boyd Petty, Manager
Pat Day, Supervisor of Health Care Inspections
Plan Review Staff

From: Mark Gates, Chief Architect
Jean Carter, Architect Supervisor
Henry Reed, Architect Supervisor
Don Zeringue, Architect Supervisor
Fidel Fremin, Architect Supervisor

Approved by: V. J. Bella,
State Fire Marshal

Date: April 18, 2001

Re: Remote Station Personnel Requirements

Question:

Will the State Fire Marshal's Office enforce the requirements of 72:5-4.5.1 (1999 edition) and mandate a minimum of two persons on duty at all remote stations?

Background:

NFPA 72 National Fire Alarm Code Requirements for remote station personnel has always mandated that "The remote supervising station shall have sufficient personnel...." However, NFPA 72:5-4.5.1 1999 edition, specifically states that the minimum number of operators on duty shall be not less than two. Some arguments are being made that NFPA has taken the

requirements for a remote station to more restrictive central station standard and will force many small monitoring facilities to stop providing this service and / or put those companies that cannot afford the required number of personnel out of business.

This office does not want to impose economic hardship on small businesses. However, the main issue is a **life safety** issue. Fire alarm systems that require off site monitoring for emergency forces notification or supervision of automatic sprinkler systems must be monitored by sufficient personnel at a constantly attended location. This office does not agree that one operator can adequately perform all of the duties of a monitoring facility (i.e., how can a system be adequately monitored when the operator goes to the restroom, lunch or has a family emergency?) In the opinion of this office, the risk is too great to jeopardize life safety by allowing required fire alarm systems to be monitored by a single operator who may handle thousands of accounts.

Determination:

All remote station facilities that monitor fire alarm systems that are required by NFPA 101 Life Safety Code, 2000 edition, to have emergency forces notification and / or supervised automatic sprinkler systems shall comply with NFPA 72:5-4.5.1. Please note that this determination does **not** apply to non-required fire alarm systems, required protected premise fire alarm systems (local) utilizing remote station service or security systems. This determination shall be effective July 1, 2001.

Note:

Required protected premise fire alarm systems (local) mentioned in the above determination utilizing remote station service submittals shall include documentation from the owner that he/she understands that the remote station monitoring features is above and beyond the code and that the monitoring facility does not comply with NFPA 72:5-4.5.1.

Application:

All plan review applications for required fire alarm systems with remote station signaling received on by this office and after July 1, 2001.