2007 Ontario Fire Code (O.Reg. 213/07) Requirements Interconnected Smoke Alarm Testing


Smoke alarms installed in Boarding, Lodging and Rooming Houses, (OFC designated 9.3 buildings): and Buildings up to and Including Six Stories in Building Height with Residential Occupancies (9.5 buildings) require annual tests of an interconnected smoke alarm system to be performed by a qualified fire alarm technician.

OFC designated Two Unit Residential Occupancies (under section 9.8) do not apply to this requirement. So don’t suggest to your next-door neighbor that you must test their smoke alarms for a nominal fee of say $5,000 per device. Since it is not required, and with all joking aside, $5000 pushes the limits of neighborly cost effective service.

However, this is a milestone in the on-going process of protecting society from the ravages of fire. The qualification requirements for fire alarms testing/servicing is now in Division C, Subsection 1.2.1., while the new interconnected smoke alarm qualification requirements are in Division C, Subsection 1.2.2.

A sample taken from the new OFC (O.Reg. 213/07) is as follows:

‘Responsibility

1.2.1.3. Despite Article 1.2.1.1. of Division A, any person who performs the work described in Article 1.2.1.1. of this Division on a fire alarm system is responsible for complying with Article 1.2.1.2. of this Division.

Subsection 1.2.2. Qualifications and Responsibilities of Persons Performing Work on Interconnected Smoke Alarm Systems

Application

1.2.2.1. This subsection applies to every person who performs annual tests of an interconnected smoke alarm system required under Article 6.3.2.6. of Division B and any person who repairs, replaces or alters components of such an interconnected smoke alarm system.

Qualifications

1.2.2.2. (1) Any person who performs the work described in Article 1.2.2.1. on an interconnected smoke alarm system shall

(a) have successfully completed a program or course acceptable to the Fire Marshal,
(b) produce for inspection, upon request by the owner or the Chief Fire Official, a copy of a certificate or document attesting to the successful completion of a program or course referenced in Clause (a), and

(c) perform the test and maintenance in accordance with Article 6.3.2.6. of Division B.

(2) Despite Sentence (1), a person who has not successfully completed the required program or course may perform the work described in Sentence (1) provided that

(a) the work is done under the supervision of a person who has successfully completed a program or course required in Clause (1)(a),

(b) no more than two persons work under the supervision of the person referred to in Clause (a) at the same time, and

(c) the supervision is provided at the work site.

(3) Any person supervising another as permitted in Sentence (2)

(a) shall advise the owner in writing that the work has been completed in accordance with Article 6.3.2.6. of Division B, and

(b) is deemed to be the person referred to in Article 1.2.2.2.

Responsibility

1.2.2.3. Despite Article 1.2.1.1. of Division A, any person who performs the work described in Article 1.2.2.1. of this Division on an interconnected smoke alarm system is responsible for complying with Article 1.2.2.2. of this Division.”

The Canadian Fire Alarm Association’s Fire Alarm Technology Program is an acceptable course approved by the Ontario Fire Marshal. So now it is time for a refresher:

The CFAA was formed in 1973. During the early 1980's the CFAA established the Fire Alarm Technology Program, leading to personal registration as a fire alarm technician.

It was created to provide training in the specialized area of fire alarm systems, thereby increasing the knowledge level of persons directly involved in the fire alarm industry.

Over the last 20 years, various Authorities Having Jurisdiction nationwide, including the Ontario Fire Marshal have approved this educational program. Our educational program is now widely recognized and celebrated within the fire protection industry.

The OFC also requires fire alarm systems to be INSPECTED and TESTED in conformance with CAN/ULC-S536-04, “Inspection and Testing of Fire Alarm Systems”. Also, Subsection 1.2.2.1. “applies to every person who performs annual tests of an interconnected smoke alarm system required under Article 6.3.2.6. of Division B”

In the mid 1990’s the OFM established a Fire Alarm Training Program Review committee (FATPR). This committee will evaluate various fire alarm training programs submitted for review and determine whether they satisfy the requirements of the proposed 2007 Ontario Fire Code (O.Reg. 213/07).
The 1997 Ontario Fire Code (O.Reg. 388/97 as amended) referenced the fire alarm technician Qualification in Sentence 1.1.5.3.(1). The proposed 2007 Ontario Fire Code (O.Reg. 213/07) references the qualification in “Division C, Subsection 1.2.1.,” while the new interconnected smoke alarm qualification requirements are in “Division C, Subsection 1.2.2.”

The OFM committee is made up of public and private sector representatives with a wide-ranging background in fire alarm systems, life safety technology.

To date, the CFAA fire alarm training programs have been reviewed by the FATPR committee and deemed to be acceptable, meeting the requirements of 1997’s Sentence 1.1.5.3.(1) of the Ontario Fire Code (O.Reg. 388/97 as amended).

Following approval of this program in 1997, the FATPR committee requested a renewal course be provided after the release of the next generation of Provincial Building Codes and Standards.

Unfortunately, release of the new National Building Code, (last Building Code 1995) was in development for a number of years exceeding the typical 5 year cycle, i.e 2006 National Building Code.

In order to further protect the public from the ravages of fire, the intent is to ensure fire alarm technician training is up to date and CFAA Technicians are informed and knowledgeable in regards to application of current Codes and Standards such as the proposed 2007 OFC.

Currently, the Education Committee of the CFAA is developing a “Technician Re-certification Course”. More details regarding the course, requirements and syllabus will be released in the coming months. The Re-certification Course development committee is actively working on preparing training modules that address the Code and Standard updates. This including the testing of interconnected smoke alarms in Boarding, Lodging and Rooming Houses, and buildings up to and including six stories in building height with residential occupancies.

In summary, the 2007 Fire Code has new requirements for qualifications of technicians testing and maintaining interconnected smoke alarms, we are aware of these changes and are in process of addressing them in our on-going efforts to protect society from the ravages of fire.

“Changing one thing for the better is worth more than proving a thousand things are wrong.”