A-3.2.4.8.(2) **Fire Alarm Zones.** Alarm initiating devices referred to in this Sentence include fire detectors, water flow switches and manual stations. If a room or space in a building extends through more than one storey of the building, as in the case of multi-level dwelling units and machinery rooms, judgment must be exercised in the zoning and announcement of the fire detectors in that room or space. In general, the lowest storey on which access is provided into the room or space should be indicated on the annunciator to avoid unnecessary delays for the responding firefighters. Consideration should also be given to the use of numbers or letters on the annunciator that correspond to those used in the building elevators.

A-3.2.4.9.(2)(f) **Supervision for Fire Pumps.** Specific electrical supervision for fire pumps is stated in NFPA 20, "Installation of Stationary Pumps for Fire Protection," which is referenced in NFPA 13, "Installation of Sprinkler Systems."

A-3.2.4.11.(1) **Smoke Detector Location.** In the design and installation of the smoke detection system, consideration must be given to all features which could have a bearing on the location and sensitivity of the detectors, including ceiling height, sloped ceilings, diffusion from air conditioning and ventilating currents, obstructions, baffles, and other pertinent physical configurations that might interfere with the proper operation of the system.

A-3.2.4.11.(2) **Visible Signals.** If staff located in each zone or compartment can see each sleeping room door, visible signals may be located above each door. If staff cannot see every door, it is intended that the visible signals be provided at the location where the staff are normally in attendance. The audible signal is intended to alert staff of the need to check the visible signals.

A-3.2.4.16.(1) **Manual Station.** Only one manual station need be provided near a group of doors serving as a principal entrance or as a single exit facility.

A-3.2.4.18. **Acoustic Measurement and Terminology.** The following notes on acoustic measurement and terminology are intended to assist in the application of the requirements for audibility of fire alarm system sounding devices.

The background or ambient measurement should be a spatial averaged A-weighted equivalent sound level measured for 60 s. This can be obtained using an integrating sound level meter with the integration time set to 60 s. During the measurement period the meter should be slowly moved about so as to sample the space uniformly but coming no closer than 0.5 m from any solid wall, floor or ceiling. Alternatively, measurements can be made at 3 or more positions throughout the space and an energy average calculated.

The measurement of the alarm level depends on the type of alarm signal. If the signal is a continuous signal from a bell or siren, the spatial averaged A-weighted equivalent sound level should be obtained. The integration time should be long enough to obtain a reasonable spatial average of the space, but not less than 10 s.

If the alarm has a temporal pattern, then the A-weighted sound level should be measured using the 'fast' time constant during the 'on' part of the cycle. In this situation it is not appropriate to use an integrating sound level meter. Since the duty cycle of the alarm is only 37.5% at best, that type of meter would give a reading that is 4 or more decibels lower than the level while the alarm is 'on.' A number of measurements should be made about the space in question and the average value used to obtain a good spatial representation. Strictly speaking, the energy average of the measurements should be used; however, the frequency spectrum associated with most alarms is of a type that should give little variation about the space. If the measured levels don’t vary by more than 2 to 3 dB, then an arithmetic average rather than an energy average can be used.

**Effect of Furnishings**

The final inspection of a fire alarm system is seldom made when the building is furnished and ready for occupancy. This results in measured levels which may be several decibels higher than will be found in the occupied building. The importance of this difference depends on the situation.

If the building is complete except for furnishings, so that the sources of ambient noise are present, then the amount by which the alarm signal exceeds the ambient level will not change appreciably with the introduction of furnishings. In this case both levels will be reduced by about the same amount.

If the primary source of ambient noise will be office equipment and workers, as would be expected in an open plan office, then measurements made prior to occupancy may differ substantially from those made afterwards. This may be true for both the absolute sound levels and the difference between the alarm level and the ambient.
A-3.2.4. Fire Alarm System. The term “fire alarm system” used in this Subsection applies to fire alarm systems with or without voice communication capability.

A-3.2.4.4.(1) Single Stage Fire Alarm System. This requirement, in combination with Article 3.2.4.21., is intended to allow for the provision of voice communication capability as an integral part of a single stage fire alarm system.

A-3.2.4.4.(2)(c) Fire Alarm Alert Signal. In a 2 stage fire alarm system described in Sentence 3.2.4.4.(2), the alert signal may be transmitted to audible signal devices in designated locations or to audible signal devices throughout the building. If actuated, the second stage alarm signal in a 2 stage fire alarm system may sound throughout all zones in the building. All manual station key switches would typically initiate the alarm signal.

Sentence 3.2.4.4.(2) also allows the implementation of a “zoned 2-stage” sequence of operation, whereby the alarm signal sounds in the zone of key switch actuation (and perhaps in the adjacent zones, which may be the storey above and the storey below) and the alert signal sounds throughout the rest of the building. This sequencing would be created automatically by the fire alarm control unit.

The key or special device referred to in Clause 3.2.4.4.(2)(c) should be immediately available to all persons on duty who have been given authority to sound an alarm signal.

A-3.2.4.4.(2) Two Stage Fire Alarm System. Sentence 3.2.4.4.(2), in combination with Article 3.2.4.21., is intended to allow for the provision of voice communication capability as an integral part of a 2 stage fire alarm system.

A-3.2.4.6.(2) Access to Silencing Switches. This requirement is intended to prevent easy access to silencing switches. The satisfactory operation of a fire alarm system to alert the occupants of a building to an emergency is predicated on the assumption that the alarm signal will be silenced only after responsible staff have verified that no emergency exists. Details on the emergency procedures to be used in case of fire are contained in the NFC.

A-3.2.4.7.(4) Fire Department Notification. In some jurisdictions, the fire department may utilize, or have available, a municipal fire alarm system or equipment intended for receiving notification by means of a direct connection. If used, it is expected that these systems and installations conform to the requirements of Sentence (4) so as to achieve and provide a uniform and reliable level of service. It is also intended that a proprietary central station as well as a fire brigade used by a large corporation, university campus or similar site comply with Sentence (4).

A-3.2.4.7.(5)(b) Emergency Telephone Number. In many municipalities an emergency telephone number, for example 911, is used for all emergency services and it is preferable to post that number.