



HCFMO

Harris County Fire Marshal

Laurie L. Christensen
Fire Marshal

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RE: Fire Alarm Panel Replacement

There has been some confusion as to the need for permitting on alarm work in Harris County. As the authority having jurisdiction for fire and life safety inspections in the unincorporated areas of Harris County, Texas, the Fire Marshal's Office offers this interpretation and requirements.

Prior to the newest adoption of the 2018 ed. of the IFC with Harris County Amendments, which took effect on September 1, 2019, the Harris County Engineering website offered the following information: *The terms like-for-like and one-for-one and any other similar terms are not recognized by Harris County with regards to fire alarm systems. Any work to a system that is not considered **maintenance** per Texas Insurance Code 6002 (See also NFPA 25) will be required to be submitted, reviewed, approved and permitted through the Fire Protection Group.*

The definition of maintenance according to Texas Insurance Code Sec. 6002.002 (8) "*Maintenance*" means *the maintenance of a fire alarm device or a fire detection device in a condition of repair that provides performance as originally designed or intended. The Harris County Fire Marshal's Office understands these items to be individual initiating and notification devices not panels.*

The newly adopted fire code, under definitions, *Fire Alarm Control Panel Replacement and Maintenance* - *Any maintenance to an existing fire alarm control panel that involves replacement or upgrade that requires a new installation tag and certification shall be considered a new system and shall meet the requirements of Section 907.2*

The conclusion is that if the alarm panel has to be replaced, a new installation tag hung, and/or acceptance test performed, the work will require submittal of plans for approval and the issuance of a permit.

Harris County Engineering's process to obtain a permit for a panel replacement is:

- Completed fire protection application;
- Submit a floorplan showing the location of the panel to be replaced;
- Manufactures specifications of the new panel;

Note: A plan showing all the field devices is not required.

Very Respectfully,

Lt. Eric Cooley
Harris County Fire Marshal's Office