

An Introduction to Mass Notification and Emergency Notification Systems Webinar
April 12, 2018 1-2pm (ET)
Unanswered Questions

- 1. Question:** Can an in-building fire alarm emergency voice alarm communication system be used for emergencies other than fire?
Answer: NFPA 72, the International Fire Code (IFC) and NFPA 101 permit an in-building fire emergency voice/alarm communication system to be used for fire and other emergencies.
- 2. Question:** Is the priority of notification something that is programmed into the FA system, or controlled manually by first responders?
Answer: The priority of mass notification messages shall be established using the emergency response plan and may be programmed into the FA system, or controlled manually by first responders.
- 3. Question:** Hi Does NFPA 72 address smartphone use?
Answer: At present NFPA 72 is silent about smartphone use.
- 4. Question:** Does NFPA address qualifications for authorized use of the Fire Alarm or Mass Notification Systems and training?
Answer: The section 10.5 of NFPA 72 covers the qualification requirements for the system designer; system installer; programming personnel; plans examiners, inspectors, supervising station operators as well as the inspection, testing, and service personnel.
- 5. Question:** Would IFC/IBC Section 917.1 be required for a major renovation of an existing building that has an assembly space of 1,000 or more?
Answer: Section 917.1 specially states a “new building” requiring a fire alarm system
- 6. Question:** Does the AHJ have authority over the emergency response plan?
Answer: Section 24.14.2 of NFPA 72 applies to performance based mass notification systems and it requires the risk analysis to be approved by the AHJ. All mass notification systems are unique and therefore could be considered a performance based. Also, Section 401.2 of the IFC requires the fire safety plan to be approved by the fire code official.
- 7. Question:** Does the 1000 occupant load requirement in section 917.1 of the IFC apply only to the new building or the total occupant load of the entire campus?
Answer: The language in 917.1 specifies “a multiple-building college or university campus having a cumulative building occupant load of 1,000. Therefore it applies to the occupant load of all college or university campus buildings.

8. Question: Is there a way to override the fire alarm system remotely or do you need to be physically at the fire panel

Answer: Section 24.5.2.2 of NFPA 72, where required by the emergency response plan, permits authorized personnel to remotely activate live and prerecorded emergency messages of the mass notification system

9. Question: What are the requirements/standards for the risk analysis?

Answer: Chapter 24 of NFPA 72 has detailed requirements relating to performing a risk analysis.

10. Question: Please explain what a STI and CIS scale is.

Answer: Instrument based methods for predicting speech intelligibility need to be accurate and repeatable. The two most common methods have their own scale. They are

- The Speech Transmission Index (STI) is widely used and has been implemented in portable test meters
- The second method is the Common Intelligibility Scale (CIS).

Annex D in the 2010 edition of NFPA 72 has a detailed explanation of the STI and CIS scales.

11. Question: You mention stake holders several times in the presentation. What is a stake holder?

Answer: Any individual, group or organization having an interest in the successful completion of a project. Examples are the owner, architects, engineers, authorities having jurisdiction and insurance companies.

12. Question: Is there any code that references priority of message/signal when you're using Fire Alarm for Mass Notification?

Answer:

- 24.5.13.2 The local building mass notification system shall have the ability to override the fire alarm system with live voice or manual activation of a higher priority message, but only where that message and operation are approved under the emergency response plan.
- 24.3.11.10 the risk analysis shall be used as the basis for development of the ECS provisions of the facility emergency response plan.
- 24.3.12* Emergency Response Plan Elements. A well-defined emergency response plan shall be developed in accordance with NFPA 1600 and NFPA 1620 as part of the design and implementation of a mass notification system.

13. Question: Are the speakers you just showed the only permitted products in an open area?

Answer: The speakers I referenced are non-fire alarm listed speakers and section 24.3.1.2 of the 2016 edition of NFPA 72 ONLY permits them to be installed in acoustically challenging spaces. If an open area is outdoors, then the answer "may" be

yes because this would be very challenging for fire alarm listed speakers to provide intelligible voice messages.

14. Question: Does an acoustically distinguishable space (ADS) that has non-fire listed speakers have to be supervised as if it were listed for fire use?

Answer: Section 24.3.1.2 of the 2016 edition of NFPA 72 permits non-fire alarm listed speakers to be installed in acoustically challenging spaces. The section is silent about if these speakers are to be monitored for integrity. A failure of a non-listed speaker should not disrupt the operation of listed fire alarm speakers or the operation of the fire alarm/mass notification system. Usually, a dedicated speaker circuit is necessary to meet this functionality.

15. Question: Does NFPA 72 permit a MNS control unit to be interfaced with a fire alarm control unit?

Answer: Yes. However, the MNS must have a fire alarm control interface and it must be listed to prevent other systems from interfering with or controlling the fire alarm system.