

THE CITY OF McALLEN
FIRE PREVENTION DIVISION
OFFICE OF THE FIRE MARSHAL
REQUEST FOR ADMINISTRATIVE RULING

Property Address: City of McAllen Owner/Occupant: N/A

Subject: Digital Cellular Communications

Date: July 15, 2015 Inspector/Licensed Company: N/A

Statement of Need: Advances in digital cellular communications technology have enabled powerful new capabilities in alarm transmission that are reflected in important changes to National Fire Protection Agency and Underwriters Laboratories standards for commercial fire alarm systems. These new digital cellular communication capabilities can reduce the ongoing cost of system operation while also enhancing system security in a manner that conforms to NFPA 72 and UL requirements. Older versions of NFPA 72 require a customer to have two dedicated phone lines for commercial fire alarm systems. The idea behind this approach is if one phone line should fail, the other likely would still be functional. But redundant phone lines are costly, requiring commercial accounts to pay as much as \$700-\$1200 per year in phone charges for every one of their locations. As part of the programming process, the system prompts technicians to enter the number of minutes for check-in and fail-time. **The most recent versions of NFPA 72 allows a single communications link to the central station to be used if the integrity of the entire communications path is verified more frequently-once every five minutes instead of once every 24.** The net result is a higher level of reliability in comparison of traditional systems that rely on redundant phone lines and the substantially less frequent 24-hour supervision reports associated with that approach.

Code References: NFPA 72 allows a single communications link to the central station to be used if the integrity of the entire communications path is verified more frequently-once every five minutes instead of once every twenty four hours. The relevant section of NFPA 2010 code is 26.6.3.1.4.1.

Note: This ruling supersedes the ruling made on March 19, 2012.

Name: Juan P. Salinas, Fire Marshal
Fire Prevention Officer/Licensed Company Representative


Fire Marshal's Approval

Date: July 15, 2015