

VCC Supervisory Requirements for Fire Alarm and Sprinkler Systems

The nature of the 2021 Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (VUSBC) and the 2019 edition of the National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code (NFPA 72) requirements for the supervision of fire alarm and sprinkler systems can be confusing to both A/E's and agencies. Sometimes they think that because (a) they have a centrally located fire alarm control panel on campus that monitors all of the campus fire alarm systems, and (b) the control panel is "monitored by staff" on a 24/7 basis, they have supervision in place that complies with the governing codes. In some cases, this assumption may be correct – but not always. There are a small number of state-owned facilities that actually maintain compliant proprietary fire alarm supervising stations. Other state-owned facilities have buildings that are connected to a central station fire alarm service. The overarching question is this: as a state agency, do you actually know what you have in place, and is it compliant? This article hopes to demystify some of the requirements in NFPA 72 and associated UL listings and clarify the available supervision options.



Supervisory requirements for fire alarm and fire sprinkler systems such as those found in 2021 VCC Sections 901.6.1, 901.6.3, 903.4.1, and 907.6.6 have been in the VUSBC for many years. These sections require that fire alarm and fire sprinkler systems be monitored by an approved supervising station that complies with NFPA 72. Chapter 26 of NFPA 72-2019 (or some variations thereof in previous NFPA 72 editions) contains the requirements for Supervising Station Alarm Systems which are defined in Section 3.3.291. Sections 3.3.290 (Supervising Stations) and 3.3.292 (Supervising Station Service) provide further clarification. Per Section 3.3.217, the term "protected premises," in this article refers to the physical location protected by a fire alarm system.

The descriptions of the three available types of Supervising Stations below apply to *fire alarm* Supervising Stations since there are other types of Supervising Station systems that are used solely for *burglar* alarm systems. There are, however, some Supervising Station systems which are approved for both fire alarm and burglary use, which would be acceptable. The choice of which Supervising Station method to select is a decision to be made by the agency with the advice of their consultants. Consultants will need to be familiar with communication systems as well as with fire alarm systems in general.

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Central Station Service Alarm Systems

Section 26.3 covers Central Station Service Alarm Systems (third party monitoring services for multiple property owners). The Central Station shall be *listed* as required by Sections such as 3.3.290.1, 3.3.291.1, 3.3.292.1, and 26.3.4. The fire alarm system control units for each protected premises shall be listed per UL 864 testing for fire alarm central station protected premises service. In this option, supervision of fire alarm systems are handled by trained operators at a remote (offsite) location that meets the requirements of UL 827 (Standard for Central Station Alarm Services). Documentation of compliance shall be physically posted within 3 feet of each monitored control unit. Central service supervision is essentially a one-stop shop for fire alarm system monitoring whereby agencies subscribe to a service.

Proprietary Supervising Station Alarm Systems

Section 26.4 covers Proprietary Supervising Station Alarm Systems, where a supervising station under the same ownership as the protected premises fire alarm system(s) is provided by the agency. This option is often desirable for campus settings such as universities with multiple supervised buildings. The requirements for a proprietary supervising system receiving station are quite rigorous. For instance, the agency is required to locate the station in a fire-resistive separate building or a fire-resistive separate room within a building. The station is required to be designed to limit access to only those persons who are responsible for the implementation of fire related emergency procedures. There shall be at least two qualified operators on duty at all times who shall be dedicated solely to the monitoring of signals and initiation of appropriate actions. The supervising station fire alarm control unit shall be listed for proprietary fire alarm receiving service. The fire alarm control units in each protected building shall be listed for fire alarm proprietary fire alarm protected premises service and shall be listed per UL 864 testing.

Remote Supervising Station Alarm Systems

Section 26.5 covers Remote Supervising Station Alarm Systems. Remote Supervising Station Alarm systems are third party firms that also serve multiple property owners. Unlike Central Station Service Alarm Systems, they are *not* required to be listed and generally do not provide the same level of protection offered by listed central stations. Section 26.5.2 requires that annual documentation be submitted by the owner to the authority having jurisdiction. For state-owned facilities, the State Fire Marshal is the authority having jurisdiction. The fire alarm system control units for each protected premises shall be listed per UL 864 testing for fire alarm remote station protected premises service. For both Central Station service and Remote Supervising Station service, the owner has to pay for the service (annual/monthly fee) as well as the use of the communications infrastructure to connect to the service. The central station or remote supervisory station service firms may also have additional equipment and fee requirements that the protected premises owner needs to meet.

The decision to implement any one of the three available options for fire alarm system supervision described above is an important one that must be thoroughly understood. Agencies are encouraged to take inventory of their current equipment and service arrangements to ensure that they comply with the VUSBC and NFPA 72.



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DEB Welcomes Three Team Members



Bruce Campbell is a Professional Engineer and Certified Commissioning Agent who recently joined the DEB team as a State Review Mechanical Engineer. Bruce earned his Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in Terre Haute, Indiana. Bruce has over 40 years of experience in the design, project management, and construction administration of engineering projects for the construction and renovation of institutional, commercial, and multi-family buildings.



Shane Ogilvie recently joined the DEB team as a Capital Outlay Program Manager with over 13 years of project management experience in large scale commercial, governmental, higher education, high rise, pharmaceutical, and sporting venue construction projects with varying project delivery methods. He is a graduate of East Carolina University with a Bachelor's degree in Construction Management, a minor in Business Administration, and is a certified PMI Project Management Professional (PMP). Most recently, Shane worked with Gilbane Building Company for over 12 years in Virginia managing construction projects for various public and private clients across Virginia from Blacksburg to Williamsburg.



Kate Stuber joined the DEB team in August as a Business Operations Specialist. She earned her Bachelor's degree in History with a minor in Russian language from William and Mary before embarking on a long and varied employment journey that has led her here. Until recently, Kate had been working at the Department of Education in both IT project management and cybersecurity support roles. She looks forward to bringing her experience in process improvement and project coordination to this intriguing professional field.

Employment Opportunities

Capital Outlay Cost Reviewer – P0147

The Division of Engineering & Buildings is hiring for a Capital Outlay Reviewer to work on the Cost Review team. This Reviewer will ensure that the Construction & Professional Services Manual (CPSM) capital outlay building cost policies and practices are correctly applied and coordinated for the design of state-owned buildings and structures. This Reviewer will also provide pre-build technical expertise to the Capital Outlay Plan Advisory Committee and ensure that state capital outlay facilities / projects conform to good construction practices, are economical solutions to program requirements, conform to procurement standards, and are within the project description authorized by the Governor and the Legislature.

State Review Electrical Engineer - EE025

DEB is seeking a qualified licensed Engineer to perform tasks related to Electrical Engineering Review of building plans and specifications and inspection of construction. As experienced design professionals, State Review Architect / Engineers exercise their knowledge, skills, and abilities to improve the design of large and small public institutional and academic structures throughout the Commonwealth. This position ensures building code compliance, best practices for design development, construction detailing, and the proper use of public funds through reviews, comments, and collaboration. In addition, unique alternative technical design solutions are researched and evaluated. Field work provides the opportunity to travel throughout the Commonwealth and observe and inspect construction at all stages.

VCCO Certifications

The following individuals recently passed the Virginia Construction Contracting Officer (VCCO) certification examination:

- **Thomas Shell**, Department of Military Affairs
- **Autumn Foster**, James Madison University
- **Keith Tisdell**, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services
- **Aaron Largent**, James Madison University
- **Will Holman**, Department of Military Affairs
- **James Eggers**, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services
- **Jose Nunez**, The Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind



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Virginia Construction Contracting Officers are state and local government employees who have completed the necessary training and successfully passed a multi-part examination focused on state procurement law, policy and procedures. VCCOs perform several key functions in delivering projects including the procurement of professional services; the receipt, opening and review of bids; and in some cases the approval of CO-8 forms for recommending the award of construction contracts.

Upcoming CPSM Seminar

DEB is pleased to announce the upcoming fall session of the CPSM Seminar. Sessions will be held virtually on four half days from September 30-October 9. To receive more information, please fill out a [CPSM Seminar Interest Form](#).

DEB Forms Updates

The form listings below identify the forms that have been added or revised and describes the forms.

Form Name	DGS Form #	Version
CR-2 Cost Review Questionnaire	DGS-30-199	08/25
CR-1 Project Planner	DGS-30-902	07/25
CO-3a Terms and Conditions of the A-E Contract	DGS-30-018	07/25

