



## **OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL**

Fire Alarm Advisory Committee

September 12, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Office of the State Fire Marshal

3780 Kilroy Airport Way, Suite 500

Long Beach, CA 90806

10 a.m.- 3 p.m. (Pacific Daylight Time)

### COMMITTEE GOAL

To provide a means of communication between the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM), representatives of industry and fire service, and the public to seek comments and specific views on proposed regulations and intended future action.

### OSFM STAFF

David Castillo, Chairperson, OSFM

Al Adams, OSFM

Greg Andersen, OSFM

Ben Ho, OSFM

Nickell Mosely, OSFM

### MEMBERS PRESENT

Sagiv Weiss-Ishai, San Francisco Fire Department

Rick Cortina, Apple Valley Communications

Jay Levy, California Automatic Fire Alarm Association (CAFAA)

Rick Lewis, Sabah International

David Meyers, Riverside County Fire Department

### MEMBERS ATTENDING VIA TELECONFERENCE

Richard Roberts, National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA)

Nanci Timmins, Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development

Shane Clary, Bay Alarm Company

John Guhl, NoFireOne

Wendy Gifford, Nest Laboratories

Andrew Thul, SLS Fire Inc.

### MEMBERS ABSENT

John McMahon, Underwriters Laboratories (UL)

Howard Hopper, Underwriters Laboratories (UL)

## 1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL/ANNOUNCEMENT

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson David Castillo at 10:06 a.m. (Pacific Daylight Time).

- A. Welcome and Logistics briefing
- B. ROLL CALL / Determine Quorum  
Roll call was taken by Nickell Mosely. Chairperson David Castillo determined that a quorum of Committee members was present. All individuals present and on the telephone introduced themselves.
- C. Approval of draft meeting minutes from May 8, 2019 meeting.  
After the Committee members reviewed the minutes, a motion and a second were made to approve the minutes. The motion was approved with unanimously voted and the minutes were approved.
- D. Announcements/Updates.  
Chief Al Adams informed the Committee that the Fire Engineering and Investigations Division, Building Materials Listing Program is in the process of adding more staff and the Division is currently going through the Mission Based Budget review with the Department of Finance.

## 2. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Form a workgroup to address notification as decided in Items III-A and IV-B.  
Sagiv Weiss-Ishai said that the 2016 edition of the California Fire Code (CFC), Section 907 addresses visual alarms such as strobe lights and includes lists in Section 907.5 of the public use areas and common use areas where visual alarms are required. There is a difference of interpretations among Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) regarding shared offices, common use offices and other undefined rooms. After the Committee discussed different possible scenarios and real-world examples, Richard Roberts made a motion that a workgroup be formed to make a recommendation to the Committee to clarify visual alarms requirements, Rick Cortina seconded the motion. The motion was approved with unanimously voted and Sagiv Weiss-Ishai volunteered to head the workgroup.
- B. Two-way Emergency Communication System (ECS) call boxes Code Interpretation as described in Item IV-E of the meeting minutes  
Sagiv Weiss-Ishai continued the previous discussion of 2016 edition of the California Fire Code (CFC), Section 907.5.2.3.2 and asked about power sources, back-up batteries and standalone notification devices. Wendy

Gifford noted that UL is discussing a new requirement that the backup battery be the same for all auxiliary devices, so this issue could soon become a moot point. Rick Lewis agreed that this has been an issue of contention as that there is a possible discrepancy between the 2016 edition of National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 72, Chapter 29, which states that the strobe lights being discussed do not require battery back-up, and the 2016 edition of the CFC, Section 907.2.1.1.6, which is unclear if it is talking about smoke alarms or strobe lights. Jay Levy commented that he is seeing exceptions being made to smoke alarm and smoke detector rules which are not in the best interest of the public. Greg Anderson said that he would consider this issue and issue a OSFM code interpretation, if necessary.

C. Review hearing impaired devices in R-2.1 occupancies as discussed in Item III-B

Steve Anderson reports that as of now the battery is just for the devices and not the strobe and has not received any information otherwise. Rick Lewis referenced CFC-2019 Section 907.2.10.6 that it eludes to it implying to new construction only, and you need backup power to an existing structure. Sagiv Weiss-Ishai proposed a request for a code interpretation with two questions and proposed answers.

Question 1:

Is it acceptable to install CSFM Listed hard-wired smoke alarms with integral strobes in existing hearing-impaired units of existing R occupancies, to provide local in-unit audible-visual notification, where the Fire Alarm system is being upgraded/replaced?

Proposed Answer: YES

Question 2:

Is it acceptable to install CSFM Listed hard-wired smoke alarms with integral strobes in new hearing-impaired units being added to existing R occupancies, to provide local in-unit audible-visual notification, where the Fire Alarm system is being upgraded/replaced?

Proposed Answer: YES

D. Follow-up on drought restrictions on the inspection of water flow devices

Shane Clary would like to know where the State Fire Marshal's Office (OSFM) stands on rescinding the drought/water conservation memorandum that has been out for five (5) years. Greg Anderson replied that the OSFM currently does not have a formal answer and there is an informational bulletin out, which is not binding, but informational. Shane Clary would like to keep it on the agenda to revisit the issue in a future meeting.

### 3. NEW BUSINESS

A. Building Materials Listing Program Fee Increase (Title 19, Div.1, Ch. 1.5, Article 7)

Ben Ho announced that there will be a proposed fee increase for the Building Material Listings (BML) Program. The BML fees have not been increase for approximately 30 years, and to meet current demands and the need to hire new staff, the fee increase is necessary to provide the appropriate funding for the program. OSFM needs to hire two additional mechanical engineers, an analyst and administrative support to staff the program.

Richard Roberts and Wendy Gifford expressed that they want to revisit this issue in approximately three (3) years to make sure that the additional staff was indeed hired and that the problem was resolved by this solution. Wendy Gifford noted that May 29, 2020 is an important deadline because every smoke alarm and smoke detector that will be manufactured from that date forward will need to be listed to the new standards which causing a rush in listing applications. Ben Ho noted that the laboratories will play a big part in getting the rush through with supplying all the necessary required documents for listing via normal process or the Fast Track option.

B. BML program and educational webinar

Jay Levy stated the BML workgroup discussed solutions how to improve the BML Listing process to avoid unnecessary delays. David Castillo informed the members that Fire Alarms, System Components, Accessories, Smoke Alarms, Carbon Monoxide Detectors, Wood Shake Roofs and Burglar Bar Release Devices are required to be listed by Office of the State Fire Marshall. All other products are not required to be listed by OSFM. Other products not required to be listed are often listed because the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) is requesting that the product be OSFM listed due to not fully understanding the requirements of OSFM.

Ben Ho also stated that Building Code Chapter 7A, Wild Urban Interface (W.U.I.) products are required to be listed by an approved testing laboratory and not OSFM listed.

Jay Levy explained that the BML workgroups objective was to identify the issues as to why listings are taking a long time to get listed. The three parties involved are the State Fire Marshal's Office, the Testing Laboratory and the Manufacturer. The workgroup observed that if any one of those three parties didn't do their part, the entire process slows down and caused delays. The keys issues are: OSFM staffing issues were identified, the manufacturers were not submitting complete applications and all required documentation and the laboratories were not doing their part as well. It was suggested that an educational video was created and is currently being approved to be uploaded to the OSFM website to assist the manufacturers

in understanding the process for submitting a complete application. The application form was redesigned to assist in identifying fast track applications. An important key in streamlining the listing process is educating the manufacturers, the testing laboratories, and ensuring the laboratories are using a unified fast track letter format to submit to OSFM. The company contact information was expanded include additional contact persons to ensure timely communications between the manufacturer and OSFM when additional information is needed to complete the listing.

Sagiv Weiss-Ishai posed the question, is life safety/emergency communications systems required to be listed by OSFM and the Chair suggested to defer this topic to the meeting's agenda.

C. Mass Shooting and Fire Alarm Notification

Chair David Castillo stated that he has received calls asking his opinion on how OSFM would instruct the schools on mass shootings. Chair David Castillo suggested them to contact to DSA.

A concern was brought up that the manual fire alarm pull station was used to get every one out of the classroom during the mass shoot incident. One of the solution was to remove the manual pull stations. Jay Levy stated after he informally spoke to a few AHJ's that the reply he received was, as long as there is a full fire alarm system in the building and the school is fully sprinklered, they have no issue with the pull stations being removed. If the building is not sprinklered, they would not approve the removal of the pull stations.

D. California Fire Code/California Building Code Section 907.5.2.3.1 (Visual Fire Alarm Appliances) Proposed Rule Making.

Rick Lewis stated they are defining where notification appliances are required to be as they are not required in electrical rooms. The code is specific but some jurisdictions are requiring it. Sagiv Weiss-Ishai, Rick Lewis and Rick Cortina are a part of a task group addressing a proposed code interpretation to clarify this section in the fire code and the building code for visual notification, which will be discussed at the committee meeting and then submitted to Greg Andersen asking for a code interpretation. After the code interpretation is issued, it will be submitted to revise the language in the code section during code adoption cycle to clarify the issue.

Question# 1: is this section, 907.5.2.3.1 identical in all the referenced codes: California Business Code (CBC)/ California Fire Code (CFC) 2016 and CBC/CFC 2019?

Proposed answer # 1: YES

Question# 2: Is the intent of this section to require Visible Alarm Notification Appliances (Strobes) in areas/rooms/spaces which are normally not occupied such as: Electrical rooms, Intermediate Distribution

Frame (IDF) rooms, server rooms, Fire Command Centers, Janitor's clothes and utility closets, private storage rooms or closets, etc.  
Proposed answer# 2: NO

Question# 3: Is the intent of this section to require Visible Alarm Notification Appliances (Strobes) in areas/rooms/spaces such as shared office rooms, shared office space, wellness rooms, war rooms, huddle rooms, mother's feeding/lactation rooms, prayer rooms, pantry rooms, shared locker rooms, shared storage rooms, etc. which are normally occupied by two or more persons?  
Proposed answer# 3: YES

Question# 4: Is the intent of this section to require Visible Alarm Notification Appliances (Strobes) in areas/rooms/spaces such as private office rooms, wellness rooms, phone rooms, prayer rooms, cozy rooms, etc. which are normally occupied by one person only?  
Proposed answer# 4: NO

The task group also discussed proposed code changes for the 2019 Intervening Code Cycle.

907.5.2.3. 1 Public use areas and common use areas.

The proposed change is to add conference, huddle room, shared-office rooms used by two or more persons, room used by two or more persons such as phone-room, wellness-room, prayer-room, war-room, cozy-room, normally occupied (common or public use) storage room, normally-occupied common or public room/area, and exams rooms in medical office buildings to the list to clarify the varying names architects use to describe areas.

Sagiv Weiss-Ishai suggested if all the members agree to the proposed code changes, then he would submit the changes for code interpretation.

## OPEN FORUM

- A. Wendy Gifford brought up the Seamless Smoke Alarm Bases issue. A company that may be on the interior designing side is currently selling smoke alarm bases that have not been tested as a component to the smoke detector and is not compliant with CSFM or manufacturer installation instructions. Wendy Gifford is asking for suggestions on how to proceed with any action may be available to take. Such as requiring the company to provide the testing that was done on the products, a letter from OSFM, or legal action. It was determined that OSFM will talk to legal and then this subject will be talked about again in a future meeting. Seemingly the responsibility falls on the manufacturer to take action.
- B. Sagiv Weiss-Ishai brought up the OSFM Elevator task group, which relates to fire alarm, Chapter 30, section 3005.4.1 of CFC which has direct connect with fire alarm systems. The task group concluded that these sections will be

deleted from Building Code/Fire Code in the next code cycle. It will be effective January 1, 2019, but will be published for 2 more years. It is confusing many people, therefore, the task group will submit a code interpretation.

## MEETING ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting will be on February 5, 2020 at the Hilton Hotel, 400 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, CA 92262, from 2:00 pm to 5:00 p.m. (Pacific Daylight Time). Chairperson David Castillo adjourned the meeting.