

## Systems: Fire Alarm Documents Storage Cabinets Are Required

Where a new building is being constructed or an existing building renovated, the fire alarm system panel must be accompanied by the installation of a System Records Document Cabinet. The document storage cabinet is required by NFPA 72, *National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code*. But many of your customers may not know they can no longer store documents in the panel. Here is what you need to know for the safe-keeping of critical fire alarm system documents.

Starting with the 2013 edition of NFPA 72, all of the necessary fire alarm system documentation is required to be removed from the alarm system control unit (panel) and stored in a separate documentation cabinet. Here is a summary of the current NFPA 72 requirements from the 2019 edition.

### Document Accessibility (7.7.2):

- Alarm systems are required to have a “documentation cabinet” at the control unit (or other approved location). [7.7.2.1]
- Where the cabinet is located elsewhere, signage is required at the control unit identifying that location. [7.7.2.4]
- The cabinet must be big enough to hold all necessary documents. [7.7.2.2]
- All signaling system documents must be stored in the cabinet. [7.7.2.3]
- No documentation is permitted to be stored in the control unit. [7.7.2.3]
- Combustible documentation is not to be stored in the control unit. [A.7.7.2.3]
- The cabinet must be labeled SYSTEM RECORD DOCUMENTS. [7.7.2.5]
- The content of the cabinet is only to be accessible by authorized personnel. [7.7.2.7]
- Emergency communications system (ECS) and fire alarm system (FAS) record documentation are permitted to be stored in the same cabinet. [7.7.2.8]

Starting with the 2019 edition of NFPA 72, it became clear that documents were no longer permitted in the control unit and should have been moved, starting with the adoption of the 2013 edition.

NFPA 72, 2019 edition (clarification).

7.7.2.3 - All record documentation shall be stored in the documentation cabinet. **No record documentation shall be stored in the control unit.**

### Easy Installation by Any Technician

Although an alarm panel requires a certified low-voltage technician, to perform the work, a system record storage cabinet can be installed by almost any technician who is capable of mounting one.

### Key-Locked Cabinets

The decision to add a key lock to a cabinet is made based on whether the cabinet is in a public location (lock needed) or whether it is secure to authorized personnel only, without a lock (72, 7.7.2.7).

It should be an easy sell to a responsible organization to upgrade and store their systems records in a NFPA 72 code-compliant System Records Documents Cabinet. So when the AHJ requests documentation the documents will be secure, readily accessible, and can be made available for immediate review and approval.

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