Washington State Building Code Council

Improving the built environment by promoting health, safety and welfare

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TO: **LOCAL BUILDING AND FIRE OFFICIALS**
FROM: **STATE BUILDING CODE COUNCIL**
SUBJECT: **FIRE ALARMS IN 2015 IBC/IFC: NICET II & NICET III - NEW CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS ADOPTED BY SBCC**

The Washington State Building Code Council adopted Section 907.10 NICET: National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies in their amendments to the 2015 Building Code and the 2015 Fire Code. See the table below for that amendment language. This will require that all new and existing fire alarm systems are certified and/or inspected by (click link for specific requirements) NICET II and/or NICET III as follows:

Certification Required (effective July 1, 2017)*	Where Required	NICET Testing and Certification Requirements	Regulating Authority
907.10.2 Design Review NICET Fire Alarm Systems Level III (or a licensed PE in Washington) Fire Alarm Systems: Level III Content Outline	WAC 51-50-0907 and WAC 51-54A-0907 All construction documents shall be reviewed by a NICET Fire Alarm Systems Level III certified individual prior to being submitted for permitting. The reviewing professional shall submit a signed and dated letter; or a verification method approved by the local AHJ indicating the system has been reviewed and meets or exceeds the design requirements of the state of Washington and the local jurisdiction.	Level III certification requires a minimum of five years of relevant experience and a personal recommendation. Requires a passing score on an examination, and payment of a fee.	Enforcement and compliance will be performed at the local level by the local AHJ. There is no state agency that has responsibility for compliance and enforcement.

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Certification Required (effective July 1, 2017)*	Where Required	NICET Testing and Certification Requirements	Regulating Authority
907.10.3 Testing/maintenance NICET Fire Alarm Systems or Inspection and Testing of Fire Alarm Systems Level II	WAC 51-50-0907 and WAC 51-54A-0907 All inspection, testing, maintenance and programming not defined as 'electrical construction trade' by chapter 19.28 RCW[1] shall be completed by a NICET Fire Alarm Systems or Inspection and Testing of Fire Alarm Systems Level II certified individual.	Level II certification requires a minimum of two years of relevant experience. Requires a passing score on an examination, and payment of a fee.	Enforcement and compliance is achieved at the local level by the local AHJ. There is no state agency that has responsibility for compliance and enforcement.
General Journey Level Electrician (01) or Specialty Electrician – Limited Energy System (06). Must be employed by a licensed electrical contractor.	RCW 19.28 When performing **"Electrical construction trade"** work that includes, but is not limited to, installing or maintaining electrical wires and equipment that are used for light, heat, or power and installing and maintaining remote control, signaling, power limited, or communication circuits or systems	NICET is not required. Testing and certification is done by the Department of Labor and Industries.	Washington Department of Labor and Industries – Electrical Section.

[1] **"Electrical construction trade"** includes, but is not limited to, installing or maintaining electrical wires and equipment that are used for light, heat, or power and installing and maintaining remote control, signaling, power limited, or communication circuits or systems.

NICET's Fire Alarm Systems Certification Program is for engineering technicians working in the fire alarm industry who engage in a combination of the following fire alarm systems activities: system layout (plan preparation), system equipment selection, system installation, system acceptance testing, system trouble-shooting, system servicing, and system technical sales. Technical areas covered include applicable codes and standards, types of detectors and signaling systems, supervision requirements, power requirements, building/space structure and occupancy considerations, and basic electricity and electronics.

NICET's Fire Alarm System Inspection and Testing program is for engineering technicians engaged in the performance, documentation, planning, and coordination of periodic inspection and testing of existing fire alarm systems and their components. General areas covered include inspection and testing procedures, periodicity, documentation, safety, and work

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management. Technical areas covered include types of fire alarm systems and their respective components, device and circuit specific test procedures for initiating devices, notification appliances, supervisory signal-initiating devices, primary and secondary power supplies, emergency communications equipment, interface with other systems, and on/off premises monitoring. Certification is available through the National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies (NICET); for more information on requirements visit their website: www.nicet.org.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: What is the penalty for not having the NICET certification?
A: This is to be determined by the local AHJ.

Q: What will be used to identify a technician is certified?
A:The AHJ will check to see if the individual working on a system is in possession of a NICET wallet card or will verify their certification through the NICET website.

Q: Will an AHJ allow a stamp to be used on the drawings submitted or only a letter?
A: This would be up to the individual jurisdiction. It would be best to check with the local AHJ first.

Q: What is the verification method indicating the system has been reviewed and meets or exceeds the design requirements of the state of Washington and the local jurisdiction?
A: This would be up to the individual jurisdiction. It would be best to check with the local AHJ first.

Q: Is there a grace period in which to obtain the NICET Certification?
A: No, persons working on alarm systems need the NICET certification by July 1, 2017.

Q: If I have a low voltage electrical license am I grandfathered, not having to obtain a NICET certification?
A: No. The low voltage license is only valid when performing “Electrical construction trade" work in RCW 19.28.

References:

RCW 19.28.006(2) Definitions
(2) (b) "Class B basic electrical work" means work other than class A basic electrical work that requires minimal electrical circuit modifications and has limited exposure hazards. Class B basic electrical work includes the following:
(i) Extension of not more than one branch electrical circuit limited to one hundred twenty volts and twenty amps each where:
(A) No cover inspection is necessary; and
(B) The extension does not supply more than two outlets;

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(ii) Like-in-kind replacement of a single luminaire not exceeding two hundred seventy-seven volts and twenty amps;
(iii) Like-in-kind replacement of a motor larger than ten horsepower;
(iv) The following low voltage systems:
(A) Repair and replacement of devices not exceeding one hundred volt-amperes in Class 2, Class 3, or power limited low voltage systems in one and two-family dwellings;
(B) Repair and replacement of the following devices not exceeding one hundred volt-amperes in Class 2, Class 3, or power limited low voltage systems in other buildings, provided the equipment is not for fire alarm or nurse call systems and is not located in an area classified as hazardous by the national electrical code; or
(v) Wiring, appliances, devices, or equipment as specified by rule.

19.28.041 License required—General or specialty licenses—Fees—Application—Bond or cash deposit.
(1) It is unlawful for any person, firm, partnership, corporation, or other entity to advertise, offer to do work, submit a bid, engage in, conduct, or carry on the business of installing or maintaining wires or equipment to convey electric current, or installing or maintaining equipment to be operated by electric current as it pertains to the electrical industry, without having an unrevoked, unsuspended, and unexpired electrical contractor license, issued by the department in accordance with this chapter.

19.28.041 License required—General or specialty licenses—Fees—Application—Bond or cash deposit.
(1)(h) A specialty electrical contractor license shall grant to the holder a limited right to engage in, conduct, or carry on the business of installing or maintaining wires or equipment to carry electrical current, and installing or maintaining equipment; or installing or maintaining material to fasten or insulate such wires or equipment to be operated by electric current in the state of Washington as expressly allowed by the license.

19.28.095 Equipment repair specialty—Scope of work.
(1) The scope of work for the equipment repair specialty involves servicing, maintaining, repairing, or replacing utilization equipment or wiring, appliances, devices, or equipment as specified by rule of the department.
(2) "Utilization equipment" means equipment that is: (a) Self-contained on a single skid or frame; (b) factory built to standardized sizes or types; (c) listed or field evaluated by a laboratory or approved by the department under WAC 296-46B-030; and (d) connected as a single unit to a single source of electrical power limited to a maximum of six hundred volts. The equipment may also be connected to a separate single source of electrical control power limited to a maximum of two hundred fifty volts. Utilization equipment does not include devices used for occupant space heating by industrial, commercial, hospital, educational, public, and private commercial buildings, and other end users.
(3) "Servicing, maintaining, repairing, or replacing utilization equipment" includes:
(a) The like-in-kind replacement of the equipment if the same unmodified electrical circuit is used to supply the equipment being replaced;
(b) The like-in-kind replacement or repair of remote control components that are integral to the operation of the equipment;
(c) The like-in-kind replacement or repair of electrical components within the equipment; and
(d) The disconnection, replacement, and reconnection of low-voltage control and line voltage supply whips not over six feet in length provided there are no modifications to the characteristics of the branch circuit.
(4) "Servicing, maintaining, repairing, or replacing utilization equipment" does not include:
(a) The installation, repair, or modification of wiring that interconnects equipment and/or remote components, branch circuit conductors, services, feeders, panelboards, disconnect switches, motor control centers, remote magnetic starters/contactors, or raceway/conductor systems interconnecting multiple equipment or other electrical components;
(b) Any work providing electrical feeds into the power distribution unit or installation of conduits and raceways; or
(c) Any electrical work governed under article(s) 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 510, 511, 513, 514, 515, or 516 NEC (i.e., classified locations), except for electrical work in sewage pumping stations.

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