



Washington State Building Code Council

Improving the built environment by promoting health, safety and welfare

1500 Jefferson Street SE • P.O. Box 41449 • Olympia, Washington 98504

(360) 407-9277 • e-mail sbcc@des.wa.gov • www.sbcc.wa.gov

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.

*The Council has voted to change the compliance date to July 1, 2018; rulemaking is underway.

Certification Required (effective July 1, 2017)*	Where Required	NICET Testing and Certification Requirements	Regulating Authority
<p>907.10.3 Testing/maintenance NICET Fire Alarm Systems or Inspection and Testing of Fire Alarm Systems Level II</p>	<p>WAC 51-50-0907 and WAC 51- 54A-0907</p> <p>All inspection, testing, maintenance and programming not defined as 'electrical construction trade' by chapter 19.28 RCW¹ shall be completed by a NICET Fire Alarm Systems or Inspection and Testing of Fire Alarm Systems Level II certified individual.</p>	<p>Level II certification requires a minimum of two years of relevant experience. Requires a passing score on an examination, and payment of a fee.</p>	<p>Enforcement and compliance is achieved at the local level by the local AHJ.</p> <p>There is no state agency that has responsibility for compliance and enforcement.</p>
<p>General Journey Level Electrician (01) or Specialty Electrician – Limited Energy System (06).</p> <p>Must be employed by a licensed electrical contractor.</p>	<p>RCW 19.28</p> <p>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</p>	<p>NICET is not required.</p> <p>Inspection of installation or alteration is done by the Department of Labor and Industries.</p>	<p>Washington Department of Labor and Industries – Electrical Section.</p>

¹ [RCW 19.28.006](#) "**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 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 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, 2018.

Q: If I have a low voltage electrical license am I grandfathered, not having to obtain a NICET certification?

A: Only if performing work that requires an electrician's certificate of competency by L&I (such as installation). The low voltage license is only valid when performing "Electrical construction trade" work in RCW 19.28. All other tasks will require NICET certification.

References:

RCW 19.28.211 Certificate of Competency – Issuance – Renewal – Continuing Education – Fees – Effect.

(4) The certificates of competency and temporary permits provided for in this chapter grant the holder the right to work in the electrical construction trade as a master electrician, journey level electrician, or specialty electrician in accordance with their provisions throughout the state and within any of its political subdivisions without additional proof of competency or any other license, permit, or fee to engage in such work.

RCW 19.28.006 Definitions

“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.

WAC 296-46B-100 Definitions

An "installation" includes the act of installing, connecting, repairing, modifying, or otherwise performing work on an electrical system, component, equipment, or wire except as exempted by WAC 296-46B-925. An installation is not the passive testing or operational programming of an electrical system, component, equipment, or wire. See “passive testing.”

“Passive testing” (e.g., pressing of test buttons, use of testing equipment like voltage testers, clamp-on meters, removal of a device head where the wiring is terminated on a separate base plate, etc.) means testing that does not require any:

- (a) Physical modification to the electrical system wiring; or
- (b) Wiring to be disconnected or terminated, except as necessary for an approved electrical testing laboratory or approved engineer performing an equipment evaluation.