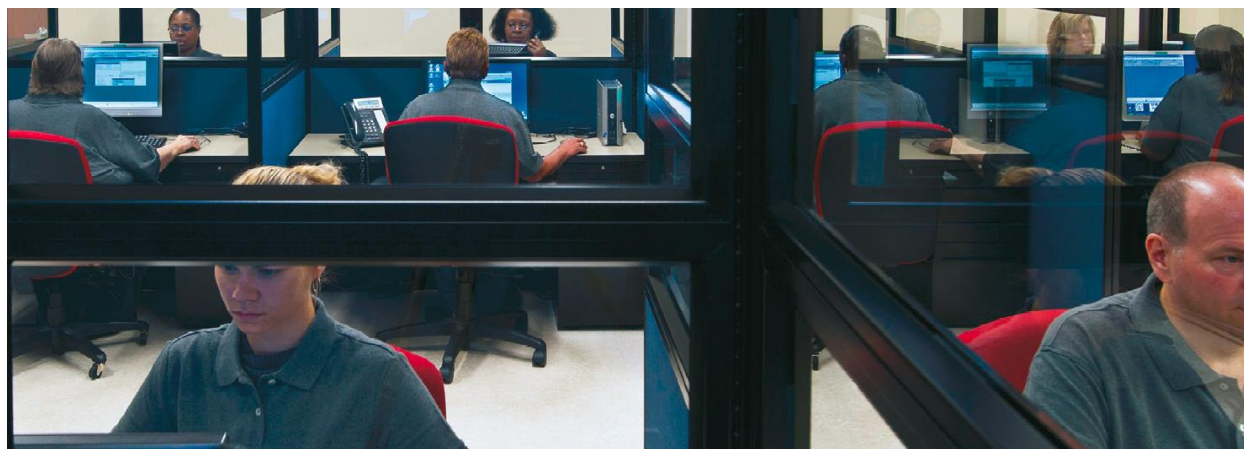




# UL Fire Alarm Certification Program



Fire officials verify that fire alarm systems are installed per applicable code requirements. However, once these systems are installed it is a challenge for many jurisdictions to ensure they continue to comply with code requirements. The UL fire alarm certificate program is designed to make sure that systems will continue to be tested and maintained after their initial system acceptance, and at no additional cost to the jurisdiction. There are nine things that fire officials should know about this program.

## 1. Codes require central stations to be listed.

Fire codes require some fire alarm systems to be monitored by an approved supervising station in accordance with NFPA 72, and fire officials often require these systems to be monitored by a UL Listed facility which is consistent with NFPA 72.

However, merely requiring the fire alarms systems to be monitored by a listed facility does not mean the central station will provide all of the NFPA 72 required elements for central station service.

## 2. Full central station service includes more than just monitoring.

Central station service complying with NFPA 72 includes all of the following elements:

- Proper installation of the alarm system
- Alarm, supervisory, and trouble signals that are monitored and responded to in a timely fashion
- Alarm signals that are retransmitted to local authorities with no delays
- Alarm system record keeping and reporting
- Periodic system testing and maintenance
- Prompt runner (technician) dispatch

NFPA 72 requires Central Station Service companies to provide documentation indicating compliance with these requirements. UL Certification posted at the protected property meets this requirement.

## 3. Do listed central stations provide full NFPA 72 service for the systems they monitor?

There are no requirements for UL listed central station to provide full central station service for all of the systems they monitor unless required by the local fire official. In many cases the contract between the alarm company and the owner only includes monitoring and reporting of signals from the premise fire alarm system. If the system experiences problems the owner arranges for necessary service and repair, with no time frame specified for this service.

## 4. What is covered by a UL central station listing?

UL performs an initial investigation to verify compliance with NFPA 72 and UL 827. Companies that demonstrate compliance obtain a central station listing. UL also performs periodic audits of listed central station facilities to verify ongoing

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compliance. Some of the high points of the audit are as follows:

- The central station building continues to be properly constructed and secured
- Primary and standby power are provided, maintained and periodically tested
- Listed fire alarm receiving equipment and spare parts are provided
- Sufficient staff is on duty at all times to handle alarm signal receipt and required responses
- Records of all fire alarm activity are maintained for certificated alarm systems (a key distinction)

## 5. How can fire officials confirm full central station service is provided?

When an alarm service company issues a **UL Certificate** on a central station fire alarm system it is their declaration that the system is in compliance with the NFPA 72, as stated on the UL certificate. Copies of the UL certificate can be provided to the local jurisdiction. NFPA 72, section 26.3.4.3, requires this document to be posted within three feet of the control unit. These systems are automatically covered by the UL audit program.

UL technical staff also audit alarm records to verify that required maintenance, testing and response is provided for the **UL certificated systems**. A selected number of UL certificated systems are also audited to verify compliance with NFPA 72, as shown on the certificate.

The independent UL audits are a cost effective way for jurisdictions to assure fire alarm systems are being periodically tested and serviced using an independent certification organization they trust.

## 6. Can fire authorities require UL certificates on central station systems?

Yes, this can be done by merely enforcing NFPA 72, Section 26.3.4.1, which requires documentation indicating code compliance of the premise alarm system to be issued by the organization that listed

the station prime contractor—in other words, a UL Central Station Fire Alarm Certificate.

Unfortunately, many fire authorities are not aware of this requirement, or mistakenly believe that the UL certificate is part of the alarm system documentation package required by NFPA 72, Chapter 7. That is not the case!

## 7. Are UL certificates expensive?

No. The annual cost of a UL fire alarm certificate is \$90 per system. There may be additional charges by the alarm company for providing full, code required NFPA 72 central station alarm service, especially compared to companies that provide monitoring service only. However, with almost 800 UL listed central station service providers in North America, building owners seeking UL listed central station service usually have several companies to select from, with corresponding competitive rates.

## 8. Is it easy for jurisdiction to require UL certificates?

Yes, in the jurisdictions that require UL certificates on all central station service systems, a few simple steps added to their plan review process was all that was needed to verify that a UL certificate is issued once the system is initially signed off. UL alarm auditors will be happy to work with the jurisdiction to verify that certificates are issued and maintained in force. In addition, when jurisdictions experience problems with UL certificated alarm systems, we will follow up on these concerns to make sure any discrepancies are corrected.

## 9. How can I find out more about this program?

For additional information on the UL fire alarm certification program and how it can benefit your department and the businesses within your community please contact Tom Presnak in Northbrook, IL at [Thomas.E.Presnak@ul.com](mailto:Thomas.E.Presnak@ul.com) or at +1.847.664.2651.

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