



Property Risk Consulting Guidelines

XL Risk Consulting

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TESTING AUXILIARY FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS

INTRODUCTION

Auxiliary Fire alarm systems are not common in most areas, but when provided, testing the auxiliary fire alarm system connected to a coded wired public fire reporting system will involve the master municipal fire alarm box. A jack inside the box can be arranged to either:

Method 1: In a shunt auxiliary type system, completely block the transmission of signals between the protected property and the master box. (With a local energy type system, the tripping circuit must be interrupted at the local energy system control unit in the protected property.)

OR

Method 2: Block the transmission of signals between the master box and the fire alarm headquarters receiving station.

POSITION

Use Method 1 only when work is being done on the sprinkler system. For alarm tests, use Method 2 or, if the fire department permits, transmit the signals to the public fire service communication center.

Make sure the master box is reset once testing is completed.

DISCUSSION

It is usually necessary to have a representative of the fire department present during the test. In most cases, only the fire department has a key to the master box and knows the existing conditions of the box circuits at that particular time.

In most well administered public fire reporting systems, the municipal boxes are tested at least every two months. If this is done, the department may not wish to transmit additional test signals to the communications center, and will prefer to limit the test to Method 2.

In some smaller communities, the actuation of a municipal box may automatically activate sirens or horns, and it is usually not feasible to have these audible notification appliances operate except at scheduled times. However, these appliances should not be disconnected while the circuits are being tested because they might inadvertently be left out of service. With Gamewell systems, and possibly some others, a variation of Method 2 can be used where the signals are not completely blocked but are weakened through resistors. This allows electrical impulses to be read on the circuit ammeter without operating the horn or siren relays.