
FIRE PREVENTION AND BUILDING SAFETY COMMISSION
Department of Homeland Security

Written Interpretation of the State Building Commissioner

Interpretation #: CEB-2020-34-2014 IBC-903.4

Building or Fire Safety Law Interpreted

[675 IAC 13-2.6](#), 2014 Indiana Building Code, Section 903.4 Sprinkler system supervision and alarms. All valves controlling the water supply for *automatic sprinkler systems*, pumps, tanks, water levels and temperatures, critical air pressures and waterflow switches on all sprinkler systems shall be electrically supervised by a *listed* fire alarm control unit.

Issues

1. Whether, in a multi-tenant building served throughout by a single automatic sprinkler system, Section 903.4 of the *2014 Indiana Building Code (IBC)* requires the sprinkler alarm system to provide independent supervision of individual tenant spaces within the building; and whether, in a multi-tenant building served throughout by a single automatic sprinkler system, the section requires the sprinkler alarm system to provide information to the supervising station identifying the individual tenant space in which the activating event took place.
2. Whether Section 903.4 of the 2014 IBC requires a sprinkler alarm system to notify building occupants in the event the sprinkler alarm system is activated.

Interpretation of the State Building Commissioner

1. Section 903.4 of the 2014 IBC does not require the sprinkler alarm system to provide independent supervision of individual tenant spaces when a multi-tenant building is served throughout by a single automatic sprinkler system; and it does not require such a sprinkler alarm system to provide information to the supervising station identifying the individual tenant space in which the activating event took place.
2. Section 903.4 of the 2014 IBC does not require a sprinkler alarm system to notify building occupants in the event the sprinkler alarm system is activated.

Rationale

The language of Section 903.4 of the 2014 IBC is concise and clear. Nowhere does the section specifically call for a sprinkler alarm system to supervise individual tenant spaces independently when the system serves multiple tenants, nor does it call for the system to identify in which individual tenant space the activating event occurred.

Additionally, this section does not require a sprinkler alarm system to provide building occupant notification in the event the system is activated. It must be understood that a sprinkler alarm system is not a fire alarm system. They are two distinctly different devices and they serve distinctly different purposes. The primary purpose of sprinkler alarm systems is monitoring the status of the system, including faults as well as activations. The secondary purpose of sprinkler alarm systems is to provide, when required, an external notification device to assist responders in identifying the building in which the activation has occurred. This is not a requirement to notify building occupants. That is the responsibility of fire alarm systems, which are regulated under Section 907 of the IBC. Section 907.5 does state that when a fire alarm system is required in a building, then that fire alarm system must be activated by sprinkler system water flow devices. However, even in these cases it is the fire alarm system that provides the required occupant notification, not the sprinkler alarm system.

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