

## MEMO

**To: Fire Protection/Detection Equipment Servicing Companies, Municipalities, Local Service Districts, Fire Departments, Building and Facilities Owners/Operators including Regional Health Authorities, School Boards, Municipal and Provincial Governments and Crown Corporations**

**Fr: Derek Simmons, Director of Fire Services/Fire Commissioner**

**Date: April 23, 2020**

**Re: Requirements for Inspection/Testing/Maintenance of Fire and Life Safety Equipment during the Covid Pandemic.**

While we are all doing our part to follow the Chief Medical Officer of Health recommendations regarding maintaining physical distancing and other safety requirements we cannot forget fire and life safety in our facilities. During this time, all buildings should still maintain fully operational fire and life safety systems as required by the applicable code and standards. However, we understand that there will be additional challenges to complete this work in a timely manner. The following should be used as a guide in determining which buildings will require regular inspection/testing maintenance (ITM) and which buildings may be permitted to have a delayed ITM with conditions. Where ITM may be permitted to be delayed, all building owners should check with their insurance carrier to ensure that there are no other requirements that may affect their insurance coverage. In addition, please note that where the ITM is delayed this work must be completed before a building is reopened to the public and you may experience delays as the service companies may be backlogged with work. Therefore, while the ITM may be permitted to be delayed it may be more beneficial to maintain the regular ITM schedule that will allow the facility to reopen when restrictions are lifted.

## **Personal Care Homes, Long Term Care, Hospitals, Correctional Facilities or other Facilities with High Risk Vulnerable Clients**

### **Facility Open or Staff on Site:**

Facility must continue with regular scheduled fire and life safety ITM subject to the following procedure-protocol:

- Practice social distancing. To do this, we will have all service technician and facility staff work with a separation distance of a minimum of 6 feet or 2 meters
- Staff are to wash their hands regularly and use hand sanitizer in between washes
- Call before you attend a site inspection and ask if anyone has been quarantined, sick, or traveled recently - if yes, delay the inspection
- Ask the operator the best time to visit to minimize interaction with residents and staff
- Discuss with operator opportunities for virtual inspection
- Proceed with inspections where it is safe to do so
- If the facility has a specific screening tool please follow the direction of the facility operator
- Attend the site if no contact by phone
- Ask the same questions as above when arriving on site (the person that was contacted on the phone may not be the persons on site) - again delay if any concerns
- Reschedule any deferred inspections due to health and safety concerns after the estimated quarantine period.
- Use Chief Medical Officer of Health guidelines for maintaining personal space (social distancing), sanitize (wash hands before / after exiting sites where available), and not touching your face, <https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/>
- Utilize any additional personal protective equipment as determined by on-site risk assessment, such as gloves, mask, etc.
- Complete visual inspections and avoid contact with any materials on site
- Detection equipment in occupied patient rooms exempt from testing.
- Implement “virtual” or “remote” inspections using video conference software/phone apps such as FaceTime, Skype, etc where possible.
- Leverage technology wherever possible to limit risky physical interaction.
- Utilize physical barriers, such as doors, or windows for conversations when appropriate
- Take only necessary equipment into the structure to complete the inspection

### **Facility Closed**

Defer ITM. However, ITM must be completed prior to reopening. Operator ensures weekly visual verification that there are no trouble indicators on the various systems.

### **Commercial, Retail, Industrial, Assembly, Educational Facilities (such as schools, CNA, MUN, MI), Public Facilities and Government Facilities**

#### **Facility Open or Staff on Site:**

Facility must continue with regular scheduled fire and life safety ITM subject to following the Health and Community Services (HCS) recommendations regarding maintaining physical distancing and other safety requirements.

### **Facility Closed**

Defer ITM. However, ITM must be completed prior to reopening. Operator ensures weekly visual verification that there are no trouble indicators on the various systems.

For further information regarding the ITM requirements please contact the Fire Service Division of the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment at (709) 729-1608 or your local fire department.