



Las Vegas Fire & Rescue Fire Prevention Division

INTERPRETATION NFPA 72



INTERPRETATION #: FA72-0002 (2023)	SUBJECT OF INTERPRETATION: PRIVATE MODE ALARM SIGNALING (NFPA 72 – 18.4.4, 18.5)		
APPROVED BY: SHERRI SHOUP	TITLE: ASSISTANT CHIEF/FIRE MARSHAL	EFFECTIVE DATE: NOVEMBER 7, 2023	REVISION DATE: N/A

APPLIES TO:

Fire prevention inspection staff, fire protection engineers and plan reviewers, fire protection system contractors, designers and installers.

PURPOSE:

This general informational bulletin was developed to help clarify the scope and submittal requirements for Private Mode Signaling. It is not a guarantee that the request will be approved. Audible/visible occupant notification is required throughout the protected area under Public Mode Signaling when a fire alarm system is installed within a facility. There are specific sound levels (DBA), visual intensity and specific installation locations that are addressed within the adopted Fire Code and NFPA 72.

DEFINITIONS:

Unless otherwise expressly stated, the following definitions shall, for the purposes of this interpretation, have the meanings as defined below.

IFC is the currently adopted International Fire Code

Public Operating Mode (NFPA 72 18.4.4, 18.5) is defined as Audible and Visible signaling to occupants or inhabitants of the area protected by the fire alarm system. The City of Las Vegas has also used a common definition that states if the location or space where the public has either direct access or can be left unattended would be considered public, such as an exam room.

Private Operating Mode (NFPA 72 18.4.5) is defined as Audible or Visible signaling to those directly concerned with the implementation and direction of emergency action initiating and procedure in the area protected by the fire alarm system.



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INTERPRETATION:

Las Vegas Fire and Rescue, Fire Prevention Division has adopted the following interpretation based on field experience and generally accepted industry standards.

The basic intent of Private Mode Signaling is to not install fire alarm notification appliances within specific areas of a facility where there may be patient sleeping rooms, critical care procedures occurring (Surgery rooms or similar), infant care areas, or similar. One will typically find Private Mode Signaling within nursing homes, hospital patient care areas and locations where the patients or residents are not ambulatory. This is when alarm signals may create more issues than the actual alarm condition. Signals may be life threatening rather than life saving.

Per the IFC, Section 907.2.6 exception #2 **Group I** - "Occupant notification systems are not required to be activated where private mode signaling installed in accordance with NFPA 72 is *approved by the fire code official...*".

No other occupancy group is permitted by code

Per NFPA 72 18.4.5.2 The AHJ can allow the audible signaling to be permitted to be reduced or eliminated when visible signaling is provided in accordance with Section 18.5 of NFPA 72

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS:

The request for Private Mode is a Fire Alternate Means and Methods Request (AMMR). It shall be submitted to Fire Engineering for review. Upon approval of the AMMR, the fire alarm system will be designed accordingly and submitted to AHJ for review and approval.

Here are the items, in addition to the standard submittal requirements, that shall be provided at time of submittal to allow the AHJ to consider Private mode signaling.

- a. Description of patients to be covered under Private Mode signaling
- b. A formal request in writing signed by ownership/operator requesting Private Mode to be utilized.
- c. Provide reason for the Private Mode request with ample and proper justification.
- d. The facility's Emergency Response plan policy/guidelines (Assigned medical staff and other personnel assisting the patients/residents that are incapable of evacuating during the event of alarm signal).



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- e. An operational scope in addition to the operational matrix
- f. Provide a floor plan of the specific area(s) that are desired to be Private Mode as well as specific area(s) that are not covered by Private Mode.
- g. Staff member general procedures upon alarm
- h. Fire evacuation procedures
- i. Emergency response training documentation