



# Texas Fire Alarm Association

## Dedicated to Life Safety

15705 Racine Cove, Austin, Texas 78717

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October 1, 2002

### DALLAS Meeting - OCTOBER 23rd See You at Dallas Love Field



Our next TFAA meeting is in Dallas, Wednesday October 23rd at 9:30 am. We will meet at *Dallas Love Field*. Meeting Room is on second floor of Dallas Love Field Airport. Go to ticket lobby in front of *Southwest* counter, and then follow signs that say to "Frontiers of Flight Museum". Coffee & Danish 9:00 am to 9:30 am.

Area Hotels are: Holiday Inn 214-357-8500 and Radisson 214-634-8850 and Embassy Suites 214-357-4500. **DON'T MISS THIS MEETING because:**

1. We prepare these educational and enjoyable meetings just for YOU.
2. We have excellent speakers for everyone's education and information..
3. Latest information with handouts, code discussions and etc.

#### Speakers for Dallas Meeting

J. David Kerr, Fire Marshal of Plano, TX  
Craig Gillis, Fire Marshal of Allen, TX  
Tom Presnak from U.L. Chicago, IL

Tom Duckworth & Bill Chermak, ISO  
Al Reed, PE from Reed Engineering, Dallas  
Mark Redlitz, PE from State Fire Marshal's Office

### AFAA News from National 50<sup>th</sup> AFAA Anniversary

Honoring the Past-Envisioning the Future  
April 11-12, 2003 in New Orleans

**Larry Neibauer receives Life Time Achievement Award in Minnesota**  
**Web-Based Training development has begun titled "How to prepare to take a NICET test" by AFAA. Followed shortly by a web-based version the "Automatic Fire Detection and Fire Alarm System Seminar"**

#### NICET UPDATE

Check out NICET's new improved web site at: [www.nicet.org](http://www.nicet.org). It has been reformatted for easier navigation. It provides more interaction, better graphics and more resources. It is easier to find all the applicable info for testing for fire alarm systems. Click on "Certification".



In the future you will be able to check your certification status online. You will eventually be able to determine if your preferred test center is available, pay by credit card and secure a seat instantly, over the internet.

### TAS NOW RECOGNIZES NFPA 72-1999, CH.4

The TAS technical requirements for alarms is based on the ADAAG as originally written. Because there have been advances in technologies and changes in other codes governing alarms and life safety, TDLR finds it necessary to begin recognizing and accepting compliance with other codes in regards to alarms. Also taken into consideration is the proposed technical requirements for the updated ADAAG. Therefore, audible and visual alarms complying with NFPA72-1999, Chapter 4, will be acceptable for compliance with TAS except that the maximum allowable sound level of audible notification appliances complying with section 4-3.2.1 shall have a sound level no more than 110db at the minimum hearing distance from the audible appliance. Adherence to TAS 4.28 is still also acceptable for compliance with the TABA.

This new position is allowed by TAS 2.2 Equivalent Facilitation, however, a Variance Application will not be required to be submitted to TDLR. **Issue Date: September 24, 2002, TM02-03 Alarms**

Additional information may also be viewed by visiting our website at [www.license.state.tx.us](http://www.license.state.tx.us).

### Should Your Firm Be U.L. Listed ?



From the rumors of things, maybe so. We understand some activity is taking place in the Dallas area that may be going to require new Fire Alarm systems be U. L. certified. Of course, to certify a system your company will need to be U. L. listed.

That is not as bad as it sounds, except on the pocket book. If you are doing good quality installation jobs, you won't have any problems passing the U.L. inspection. You will need to have a few other things up to U. L. standards also, such as your customer records, inspection records and a few things like that.

You will then be in a position to certify any installation you do for insurance purposes, for City Codes or what ever a certificate will be needed for. You can then be proud to say your installations are top quality and certified.

Here are some of the U.L. Inspection Guidelines for your company:

1. UL's qualification inspection program for fire alarm systems involves the examination and test of representative systems together with documentation.
2. The number of systems that need to be examined during the qualification program will vary between one and four depending upon the size and complexity of each system.
3. Only systems that have had a complete "Initial Acceptance Test" (NPPA72) are eligible for inspection.
4. "As-Built Drawings" must be available during inspection.
5. Records documenting periodic equipment testing and service.
6. During the inspection sufficient equipment and personnel should be available.

### \$20.00 Charge for Lunch



There will be a \$20.00 charge for lunch to off set the Association's cost for the meal, morning coffee & danish and afternoon soft drinks. The Association covers cost of the meeting room, guests and other costs. This also helps us keep the association's dues as low as we can in order to encourage new members.

Therefore RSVP will be important so we can arrange for your lunch. RSVP to Bob Kaczmarek at 713-944-5566 (fax)

## SFMO asks for Your Assistance

If you are inspecting or testing in Texas State Universities, it is the desire of the SFMO to ensure that deficiencies (red or yellow tags situations) are corrected on the fire alarm and detection systems. These violations, as you know, are to be reported to the AHJ (usually local fire department). The SFMO asks, that in addition to sending the report to the local AHJ, you also send a copy to the SFMO, Inspection Division, POBox 149221, Austin, TX 78714-9221. This is NOT a rule requirement, only a courtesy request by the SFMO. The Texas Department of Human Services also appreciates when you send a courtesy copy of existing violations to them for facilities under their regulatory control.

We are still the State appointed Policemen fellows, so get out your badge and do a good job. Joking aside, it is our pledge and mission to assist in getting the citizens of Texas the best fire protection we can.

## Our San Antonio Meeting

Great meeting in San Antonio was held on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2002 at the Embassy Suites. It was a joint meeting of the TFAA and SFPE Associations. We had over a 100 people turn out to hear our excellent program. Thanks to Jeff Shapiro, PE and President of the local Society of Fire Protection Engineers.

If you were not there you missed Wayne D. Moore, Master in Fire Protection Engineering. With his 30 years experience in the fire protection field, he really has a handle on what takes place and what the needs are in our industry. He is well know nationwide as Chairman of the National Fire Alarm Code Technical Correlating Committee and much more.

As usual we had an excellent Question and Answer session with Mark Redlitz, PE from the State Fire Marshal's Office. Mark also has a great feel for the industry we are in, as he had a number of years of field experience before he joined the SFM.

And we certainly thank Whitney Crahen, NICET IV, from the Fire Marshal's office in San Antonio. She provided us with very good real information on the San Antonio Review Board and their activity. It is our understanding that Ms Crahen will be joining our association, which we welcome very much and offer thanks for her recognition of our purpose.

### Are We Doing All We Can for The Fire Alarm Industry? Are We Fulfilling Our Purpose ?

The objective of our Association is to establish the professionalism and responsibility of the Association to our customers, related trades, professions and to the general public of the State of Texas. This includes:

1. Developing educational programs on codes and ordinances for installation, inspecting, and servicing fire alarm systems.
2. Initiate and support sound legislation for safety of life & property.
3. Establish working relationship with authorities having jurisdiction.
4. Abide by our Business Code of Ethics.



## Why Inspect and Test ?

- Reduce False Alarms
- Increase reliability of the Fire Alarm System
- Decrease liability for the Owner

## Nuisance False Alarms



Nuisance alarms are costly to the fire service absorbing fire department resources.

Nuisance alarms are demoralizing and potentially **dangerous to fire fighters**.

Nuisance alarms are disruptive to building occupants and can, over time, cause occupants to **ignore all alarms**. Of course, failure to respond to an actual alarm can have terrible consequences.

Nuisance alarms can result from a number of causes, but mostly from faulty equipment, misapplication of equipment, vandalism and external phenomena such as lightning storms, but can be dramatically reduced if not eliminated with some **preventative maintenance**.

Most nuisance alarms from existing fire alarm systems probably originate from detectors, with improper application being a frequent cause. **Smoke detectors** installed in places such as kitchens, furnace rooms where smoke is found under normal conditions can be expected to cause nuisance alarms.

**Dirty smoke detectors** are a major cause of nuisance alarms and the issue is not if they will get dirty, but when. Smoke detector components can degrade over time making them unstable and more prone to nuisance alarms from such sources as walkie-talkies or florescent fixtures.

Some older smoke detectors lacked adequate protection against **insect infestation**. These detectors can be seasonably troublesome in environments where small spiders or mites are present.

Electrical disturbances can cause nuisance alarms. Disturbances can result from surges on the utility company's power lines, but are usually the result of electric storms.

### Actions to eliminate nuisance alarms from smoke detectors on old fire systems:

Where smoke detectors have been installed in improper locations, they need to be relocated. In some instances substituting a smoke detector utilizing ion technology for a detector with photoelectric technology (or vice versa) can eliminate a false alarm case.

Steam from a shower can cause photoelectric detectors to false alarm. Paragraph 7-3.2.1 of 1993 NFPA 72 Code requires that the **sensitivity of detectors be periodically tested**. Detectors found outside their listed sensitivity rating should be **cleaned or replaced if too old**. Detectors in dirty locations should be cleaned on a regular scheduled basis.

As a general rule, detectors which have been installed **longer than 15 years** are candidates for replacement. They probably have degraded components and in many cases are providing inadequate protection, and probably inadequate insect protection. The state of the art has been greatly enhanced over the past fifteen years.

## One & ½ Years Old – TFAA's Web Site

Take a look at: " t f a a . n e t " and see our association's web site. Site is now one and half years old. Have you visited our site yet? If not, please do, because we would like your ideas. Site has been prepared by: J. J. Moore of JM Electronics. We invite your ideas and suggestions. Let us hear from you.

Email info to: [jj@jmee.com](mailto:jj@jmee.com)

Your website includes a copy of our New Member Application. You can print out the latest copy, if you don't have one for your next prospect. Also it includes:

Front Page	Board & Officers List
Mission (promote this)	Ethics (read & follow these)
Newsletter (current issue)	Application (bring in people)

Tom Presnak has been with UL Northbrook Since 1985. Tom's duties include performing Investigations and audits of fire alarm companies Throughout the central part of the United States.

Tom is certified as a NICET Fire Alarm Level II technician.