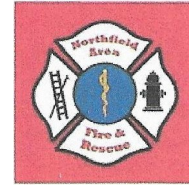




AREA FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES

301 Fifth St West  
Northfield, MN 55057  
[tom.nelson@nafrs.org](mailto:tom.nelson@nafrs.org)


Phone: (507) 366-8124  
Fax: (507) 366-8126



## Memo

To: All facility operators requiring Fire Drills

Cc: Jennifer Colby  
Rice/Steele 911 Center

From: Tom Nelson   
Fire Chief/Fire Code Official

Dt: 4/17/2025

### **RE: Fire Department Response Fee Notice – Fire Drills (Not in Test)**

Every year, Northfield Area Fire & Rescue Service (NAFRS) responds to fire alarm calls in which facility staff members are performing a fire drill as required, but the fire alarm was not put “in test” with the central station alarm monitoring company<sup>1</sup>. This results in the alarm company contacting Rice/Steele 911 Center who dispatches NAFRS.

This memo is notification that NAFRS may invoice the property owner and/or property manager a Fire Response Fee of \$250 when the fire alarm results in a page-out of the fire department. If payment is not received by the facility operator, the invoice will be forwarded to the property owner for payment. If payment is still not received, the invoice will be forwarded to the City for possible property tax assessment.

NAFRS has worked with the cities of Northfield and Dundas to ensure each building on campus settings has a discrete street address. When notifying your alarm monitoring center to put that building “in test”, it’s critical to provide the specific street address that corresponds with what the alarm company has for that building and have them confirm with the staff calling. This may not be the mailing address for the organization.

**Cease fire drill notification of Rice/Steele 911** - We understand that many facilities also notify Rice/Steele 911 Center, in addition to their alarm monitoring company, to ensure no fire alarms slip through. Discussing with Jennifer Colby at Rice/Steele 911, these notifications add to the call load and data entry for the 911 center for calls that should be prevented by the coordination between your staff your alarm monitoring center. She requests that Rice/Steele 911 Center fire drill notifications stop. We agreed to review this if it’s determined that 911 calls are made by passers-by, other staff, or residents unaware it is a fire drill.

No facility or campus should perform a “through and through” test without permission from the Fire Code Official and the supervisor of Rice/Steele 911. These tests need to be coordinated during light call load

---

<sup>1</sup> **NFPA 72 2016 sec. 14.2.4.1** Before proceeding with any testing, all persons and facilities receiving alarm, supervisory, or trouble signals and all building occupants shall be notified of the testing to prevent unnecessary response.

periods. A “through and through” test to ensure the alarm makes it to the Rice/Steele 911 center with the correct details and meeting the required times. As part of NAFRS fire alarm construction permit final tests, we perform “through and through” test. Unapproved “through and through” tests that result in a NAFRS dispatch will also garner a response fee invoice.

Note – Any time a fire alarm, fire sprinkler, or other life safety system is bypassed or taken out of service, section 901.7 of the MN State Fire Code 2020 must be followed.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> **MSFC 2020 901.7** *Provide a fire watch at all times when the fire sprinkler system or fire alarm system is out of service - OR - evacuate the building.*