

August 15, 2019
Amended May 3, 2021
Spokane Fire Department



Repair and Emergency Permits vs. Maintenance

These three examples (REPAIR, EMERGENCY, and MAINTENANCE) are provided as a guide to assist contractors, owners and Fire Prevention Bureau Staff to determine if a permit is required from the Spokane Fire Department (SFD) for certain work on fire protection systems in the City of Spokane. Note: This is *not* a comprehensive list.

Contractors: If you are not sure whether a particular project requires a permit, please contact the SFD Fire Protection Engineer, Dave Kokot at 509-625-7056.

Repair work: Repair work is required to have a permit

- Pre-planned impairments – planned changes, recalls, modifications, replacement or update of equipment. This is considered work that is required to return a system to a fully operable or a more serviceable condition.

Examples: Replace riser valves, PIVs, backflow preventer, etc.
Replace piping (6 or more fittings)
Replace 6 or more sprinkler heads or fire alarm devices
Relocate devices, changing spacing or coverage
Replace fire alarm control panel
Replace DACT, radio, or other communication device (note that upgrade to different network type is considered maintenance)
Replace/repair wiring

Emergency work: Emergency impairments are required to have a permit

- Emergency impairments - work needed to correct *unplanned* impairments and to restore the fire protection system to proper working order as soon as possible.

Examples: Emergency impairments (See IFC 901.7)
Fire sprinkler system leakage
Interruption of water supply
Frozen, cracked, broken, or ruptured piping
Unplanned equipment failure
Damage to structure
Earthquake event
Lightning strike or other natural disaster
Replace non-working fire alarm panel components (i.e.: lightning strike)
Emergency repair of wiring
Return system to operation following a fire or other incident

Maintenance work: A Permit is not required for the following:

- Work that is required to keep a system maintained in an acceptable operating condition such as: Required or scheduled periodic testing, inspection, corrections of minor defective components, or malfunctions within 24 hours that do not affect operation of system.

Examples: Replace less than 6 fire sprinkler heads or fire alarm devices (device types and locations must be the same as the original)
Replace fire alarm panel batteries
Replace/upgrade individual components of a fire alarm panel (i.e.: zone card, processor, software upgrade, etc.)
Upgrade of dialer (i.e.: 4G-5G)
Replace piping 1" or smaller – *must be less than 6 fittings*
Cleaning or flushing of piping
Annual inspections
Five-year inspections

Quiz: Does this fall under Repair/Emergency/Maintenance? Is a permit required?

- A coffee stand is removed from a grocery store. In the process the grid ceiling and one wall are removed. Four heads and associated piping are removed. The scope of this work does not fall under Repair/Emergency/Maintenance. It is a Tenant Improvement. YES, a permit is required.
- Nine recalled heads are removed and replaced with the same type of heads. This falls under Repair. YES, a permit is required.
- Three recalled heads are removed and replaced with the same type of heads. This falls under Maintenance. NO, a permit is not required.
- The ceiling has been lowered requiring sprinklers to be extended to the new height. This is a Tenant Improvement. YES, a permit is required.
- The dialer in a fire alarm panel is replaced with a cell unit. This is considered a Repair. YES, a permit is required.
- The communicator in a panel is upgraded from 4G to 5G. This is considered maintenance work and a permit is not required.