

# Aspen Fire Protection District

420 E Hopkins Ave. Aspen, Colorado 81611  
(970) 925-5532

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April 7, 2016

Dear Homeowner,

Over the past decade we have seen a dramatic rise in the number of monitored alarm systems within the Aspen Fire Protection District. While this has put more life safety devices in homes than ever before, we are now seeing an increase in false alarms as these systems age. Several years ago we began receiving false alarm calls from these systems and those calls have been increasing each year. This prompted us to step back and ask what was causing these alarms and is there a danger to the public.

We realized that alarm systems were being installed but some were not being maintained. In the majority of homes the alarm components were only seeing servicing after reaching end of life or once they became a nuisance. This also raised our concern of alarm systems that may not be reacting at all so that a dangerous condition may go unreported, thus putting its residents at risk.

Once we had identified the problem we knew we needed to change how alarm systems were approached in our district. The answer was already in place and had been since the Aspen Fire Protection District, City of Aspen, and Pitkin County had all first adopted the International Fire Code® beginning in 2003. Prior to that it had also been addressed in the Uniform Fire Code™. The International Fire Code® references NFPA 72 as the standard for installation and maintenance of fire alarm systems. The standard of maintenance found in NFPA 72 also guides the design, manufacturing, and certified listings of the different alarm components, so the system installed in your home was not designed to function without scheduled maintenance. This maintenance schedule only addresses the required life safety devices and does not include the security components. Realizing that alarm system maintenance is not just a good idea but a necessity, we have elected to highlight this long standing code requirement for the life safety of those that rely on these systems to protect their guests, friends, and family members.

We feel lucky that our motivation to emphasize this code requirement grew from false alarms and not from an injury or loss of life due to a failed alarm system. I hope you understand where we are coming from and I invite any questions or concerns you may have.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Parker Lathrop".

Parker Lathrop  
Deputy Chief / Fire Marshal

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