

Alabama Department of Public Health, Technical Services Unit

Fire Alarm Autodialer Trouble Signals

09/25/00

Where should the trouble signal indicator for an auto dialer (DACT) or other remote notification device be located within a facility? According to NFPA 72, it should be located where the facility staff can always hear the audible signal. This must be at, or adjacent to, the annunciator or status panel located at a continually staffed location. The basis for this is as follows:

1. "The trouble signal shall be located in an area where it is likely to be heard." NFPA 72, 1-5.4.6.1
2. The facility's annunciator at a continually staffed location must indicate the status of the communicator transmitter, because the transmitter is an integral component of the fire alarm system. NFPA 101, at 7-6.1.3, indicates that the alarm function can include "communication," and "the summoning of appropriate aid." This is consistent with NFPA 72 definitions in 1-4. "Digital Alarm Communicator Transmitter" is defined as a "system component." "Fire Alarm System" is defined as a system consisting of components which "initiate the appropriate response." In health care occupancies, emergency forces notification is a required "response." Just as horns and strobes are an integral part of the fire alarm system, required to give the appropriate response, so also are the components of off-site notification. Therefore, an ALL SYSTEMS NORMAL indication at the status panel must include the condition of the communicator transmitter.

In cases where facilities with older systems need to add this capability, it will be acceptable to have a separate visual and audible signal, clearly labeled, adjacent to the annunciator/status panel, in lieu of requiring replacement of this panel. The desired result will still be achieved.