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STANDARDS BULLETIN 2006-03

INTERPRETATION: FIRE ALARM SYSTEM VERIFICATION — NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS/COMPANIES (PARTIES) REQUIRED

CAN/ULC-S537-04, Verification of Fire Alarm Systems

The following is an interpretation by the ULC Subcommittee on Installation, Inspection and Testing, and Verification of Fire Alarm Systems, on CAN/ULC-S537-04 (Verification of Fire Alarm Systems) with regards to the verification of fire alarm systems.

This interpretation is being issued to provide guidance and clarification for the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) and the fire alarm industry in general.

The request for interpretation originates from the Preface of CAN/ULC-S537-04, which states:

“...The requirements of this Standard contemplates that the verification procedure described herein will be conducted by an organization other than the installing contractor and designer, and that the verification will be carried out by qualified personnel in the employ of an organization acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction. Refer to Appendix A, Qualified Personnel...”

Specifically, this relates to the portion of the Preface statement that recommends that the verification procedure should be conducted by an organization other than the installing contractor and designer.

It is important to note that the normative (mandatory) part of CAN/ULC-S537-04 (and all ULC Standards) starts from the Scope (Section 1) up to and including all Figures. Appendices may be either normative or informative and are stated as such.

All ULC standards contain a Preface, which provides informative (non-mandatory) elements about the contents of the standard. In the case of CAN/ULC-S537-04, the Preface paragraph quoted above would be considered "administrative". Administrative requirements are not permitted in the body of a "technical" Standard. The AHJ may enforce some or all portions of the Preface or any informative appendix. Consequently, it is conceivable that the AHJ may, at their option, enforce the portion of the Preface in CAN/ULC-S537-04 that relates to verification of fire alarm systems.



This Standards Bulletin is being issued in order to provide guidance to the AHJ such that the enforcement of the intent of this Preface statement is consistent with the Subcommittee interpretation (recommended approach). The approach takes into consideration that there are recognized provincial and territorial qualification requirements regarding those who design, install, verify, test and maintain fire alarm systems.

Other than the Preface, there is no other requirement in CAN/ULC-S537-04 that states that an organization other than the installing contractor and designer shall conduct the fire alarm system verification. Since this is not addressed in the mandatory portions of CAN/ULC-S537-04, the following is the Subcommittee's recommended approach with regards to fire alarm system verifications, which is based on best practice and what the Subcommittee had intended:

- A fire alarm system is designed by, and/or reviewed and signed by a professional engineer (i.e. Party 1). Refer to Appendix C1 (Fire Alarm System Verification Report), of the Standard. The designer is independent from the installing contractor and fire alarm company.
- A licensed electrician who is preferably also a fire alarm technician installs the fire alarm system (i.e. Party 2). Refer to Appendix C1 (Fire Alarm System Verification Report), of the Standard. The installing contractor is independent from the designer and the fire alarm company.
- A fire alarm technician who has received factory training on the specific fire alarm system conducts the verification (i.e. Party 3). Refer to Appendix C1 (Fire Alarm System Verification Report), of the Standard. The fire alarm technician is independent from the designer and the installing contractor.
- All verification forms required by CAN/ULC-S537-04 are to be fully completed.

Refer to the accompanying Table that illustrates possible fire alarm system verification scenarios as examples of those that comply and those that do not comply with the Preface statement.

The above process is outlined as Scenario #1 in the Table. In this scenario, the intent of Preface is met and there would be no need to have an additional organization to conduct the verification.

Scenarios #2 and #3 in the Table outline processes where an additional organization (Party 4) would be required to conduct the verification based on the intent of the Preface.


Scenario #4 in the Table would not meet the intent of the Preface.

Should you require any additional information, please contact Mahendra (Mike) Prasad at 416-757-5250 Ext. 61242 or email: mahendra.prasad@ca.ul.com



This Standard can be ordered through our website at www.ulc.ca and selecting ULC Online Store. Next, enter "S537" in Search box and click Search.

Yours truly,



G. Rae Dulmage
Director, Standards Department

FIRE ALARM SYSTEM VERIFICATION PROCESS EXAMPLE SCENARIOS	(Party 1) FIRE ALARM SYSTEM DESIGN AND SIGN-OFF (i.e. by a professional engineer)	(Party 2) FIRE ALARM SYSTEM INSTALLATION AND SIGN-OFF (i.e. by a licensed electrician)	(Party 3) FIRE ALARM SYSTEM VERIFICATION* (i.e. by a fire alarm company technician)	IS A 4 TH PARTY REQUIRED FOR THE FIRE ALARM SYSTEM VERIFICATION** (i.e. a knowledgeable, recognized company, or person)	DOES THIS SCENARIO MEET THE INTENT OF THE PREFACE OF CAN/ULC-S537?
Scenario #1	By an Independent Designer***	By an Electrical Contractor	By Fire Alarm Company No. 1 Technician	NOT REQUIRED	YES
Scenario #2	By an Independent Designer***	By Fire Alarm Company No. 1	By Fire Alarm Company No. 1 Technician	REQUIRED	YES
Scenario #3	By Fire Alarm Company No. 1	By an Electrical Contractor	By Fire Alarm Company No. 1 Technician	REQUIRED	YES
Scenario #4	By Fire Alarm Company No. 1	By Fire Alarm Company No. 1	By Fire Alarm Company No. 1 Technician	THIS SCENARIO DOES NOT MEET THE INTENT OF THE PREFACE OF CAN/ULC-S537	NO
* This verification can be done by the same fire alarm company that provided the equipment and programming.					
**4 th Party: This party is independent from Party 1 and Party 2.					
***Independent designer: Designer that is independent from the electrical contractor and the fire alarm company.					

