



February 2013 – Webinar Questions and Answers Chapter 24 – A NEW Chapter in Mass Notification

Presented By: Jack Poole, FPE

The recorded webinar along with copy of the presentation used can be found on [webinar](#) section of Fire-Lite's website.

1. My edition of the code doesn't have this information. I have the handbook #6. What book should I be consulting?
 - a. *This information is based on the 2013 edition of NFPA 72. Go to www.NFPA.org and order the most current version of NFPA 72, National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code.*
2. You noted that the MNS is not required by the building code. The fire alarm ECS is required by the building code for high riser buildings. I think IBC calls out a MNS is required for high riser buildings?
 - a. *Please acknowledge that a fire alarm fire voice evacuation system is a type/class of Emergency Communication System per definition of Chapter 24 of NFPA 72 (2013), and I agree that fire voice alarm systems are required for high-rise buildings in the IBC; but I do not believe that the IBC requires a Mass Notification System, which as a different type/class of Emergency Communication System per Chapter 24 of the IBC. A Risk Analysis is required for Mass Notification Systems, but not for Fire Voice Evacuation Systems. Please call Jack Poole at 913-747-2050 or send him an email at jpoole@poolefire.com if you would like to discuss this further.*
3. How does Chapter 24 apply when voice signaling is required by fire codes in occupancies such as assembly or high rise structures?
 - a. *Chapter 24 classifies a fire voice evacuation system as a one-way emergency communication system (not a mass notification system) and the requirements for a fire voice evacuation system in Chapter 24 are applicable.*
4. Does chapter 24 require a risk analysis be done for a simple voice evacuation system and not MNS?
 - a. *No*
5. We have just installed a new voice evacuation system to include the amber strobes next to each fire alarm strobe. Other than simply activating the amber lights at the FACP, no one can tell me their purpose in the building. Can I just treat the facility as if it only had the voice evacuation system installed?
 - a. *Amber strobes are typically used with Mass Notification System (mainly in DOD, Army and Air Force project, and when a Risk Analysis requires it for a Mass Notification System). Go back to the Engineer of Record responsible for the design and ask why are we providing Amber Strobes and what is the sequence of operations to make them activate. Fire alarm requires clear strobes. Please call Jack Poole at 913-747-2050 or send him an email at jpoole@poolefire.com if you would like to discuss this further.*
6. Who typically provides the risk analysis for a project?
 - a. *It is not developed by just 1 person. The decisions are made by the Stakeholders. Typically a Design Professional leads the process and will typically document the Risk Analysis (do the writing). Join us for the Risk Analysis webinar on March 26, 2013, Jack Poole with Poole Fire Protection (www.poolefire.com) will explain the process of a Risk Analysis.*
7. With a local MNS system how would the system activate other than pushing a button on the FACP to make the announcement? Unlike an automatic initiating device for the fire alarm system?
 - a. *The MNS message are typically active by push buttons either at the ACU or at an LOC. Keep in mind that a "fire alarm system" is not activating MNS messages. A combination fire alarm/mass notification system, using an ACU, or a stand-alone mass notification system can be used to activate Mass Notification messages.*
8. Wouldn't a MNS be the same as the Fire Alarm Voice Evac system?
 - a. *If the fire alarm voice evacuation system is also designed to be used for Mass Notification System, then yes it can utilize the same system and equipment. That is the beauty of integrating the mass notification system into the fire alarm voice system. Keep in mind that if you do mass notification system per Chapter 24 of NFPA 72, a Risk Analysis is required to determine the details of the mass notification system, both design and installation.*
9. Does the remote message override a local message??

- a. *Typically not, but we be driven by the results of the Risk Analysis.*
10. Do you feel that the inclusion of Class "C" (IP circuits) in the 2010 NFPA 72, that future one-way ECS could be an IP-based system?
- a. *From a communication standpoint yes. But not all circuits in a fire alarm or mass notification system can be Class c.*
11. How soon do you expect the future codes to require MNS?
- a. *As our industry changes and equipment is developed and approved, I see fire alarm and mass notification system being integrated as a combination system for all facilities. The way of the future in my opinion.*
12. I'm writing from Mexico and just one question, do you think that someday these kind of standards can be mandatory using UL/FM as a "regulation" area?
- a. *UL and FM are typically equipment approval/listing standards. The NFPA codes, Building Codes and the UL/FM standards go hand in hand. Example – fire alarm control units shall be tested per UL 864.*
13. How often are the inspections required?
- a. *Inspections, Testing and Maintenance of fire alarm and mass notification or emergency communication systems are required as per Chapter 14 of NFPA 72. There are different frequency and testing methods for the different components of the system.*
14. What can one expect as a cost to set up and install a MNS
- a. *It depends on the features required as driven by the Risk Analysis. It is not all about price – we the FA/MNS industry to to educate our clients (the building owner/managers to the benefit of a combination FA/MNS system. I would expect a basic combination FA/MNS system would cost about 20% more than a stand-alone fire alarm system with just horns.*
15. How do you achieve certification and what does it cost?
- a. *Certification for what? There currently are not "certifications" for Emergency Communication Systems that I am aware of.*
16. Are these codes mandatory for mass notifications that AHJ's need to adhere to or recommendations?
- a. *If NFPA 72 (2013) is adopted by a jurisdiction and a building owner wants or the building code or life safety code adopted by the jurisdiction requires a fire alarm, voice alarm, mass notification system, or any type of Emergency Communication System, then the requirements of NFPA 72 and specifically the requirements of Chapter 24 would be applicable. This needs to be discussed and coordinated with the AHJ.*
17. Can a single device can actually be used throughout to avoid installing one for fire alarm system and one for mass notification as long as it meets UL864?
- a. *Yes – if you are installing a combination fire alarm/mass notification system then if the control unit is UL 864 listed, then it is approved for both FA and MNS use. However, a UL 2572 control unit cannot be used for both fire alarm and mass notification, it is only approved for mass notification systems.*

Please note:

While we have tried to answer your questions as fully as possible there are some questions that need a more detailed answer. If you have questions regarding what was heard in this webinar here are some contacts to reach out to: For NFPA & Code related questions please contact Jack Poole via his [website](#) or by email at jpoole@poolefire.com. Fire-Lite Alarms Technical Support is available for brand specific questions. Fire-Lite Tech can be reached [online](#), via email at firelite.tech@honeywell.com or by calling 1-800-627-3473, Monday – Friday, from 8 am to 7 pm ET.