



ADVISORY BULLETIN

January 20, 2016

Subject:

Commissioning in the 2014 Alberta Building Code and 2014 Alberta Fire Code

Advisory:

Prior to the 2014 Alberta Building Code (ABC), the ABC required individual verifications of each life safety system within a building, like sprinklers or fire alarm systems. With the adoption of the 2014 ABC and Alberta Fire Code (AFC) in May 2015, there came a new requirement for commissioning of life safety and fire protection systems. This means that you need to ensure that the life safety systems will all work together as an integrated system. However, the wording of the article and the accompanying appendix note does not provide direction as to how to interpret, apply or enforce this requirement.

“Where life safety and fire protection systems are installed to comply with the provisions of this Code or the AFC, the commissioning of these integrated systems must be performed as a whole to ensure proper operation and inter-relationship between the systems.”

[From 2014 ABC article 3.2.4.6. (AFC 2.1.3.8. same except for reference to ABC)]

While monitoring the progress of the development of the National Building Code (NBC) and National Fire Code (NFC), which are the model codes for Alberta, we have become aware that in the 2015 NBC and NFC, this article and requirement will be expanded to recognize a new Underwriters Laboratory Canada (ULC) standard that deals with the testing and the integration of the life safety systems. CAN/ULC S1001-11 Standard For Integrated Systems Testing of Fire Protection and Life Safety Systems was adopted by ULC in 2011 to meet the needs of the NBC and NFC for integrated systems testing of fire protection and life safety systems and these functions within other systems. It represents the process of integrated systems testing and is the first ULC standard related to commissioning. The standard also provides an avenue for obtaining compliance with the noted ABC article above.

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CAN/ULC S1001-11 prescribes:

- Methodology for verifying and documenting that all interconnections between systems provided for fire protection and life safety functions are installed and operating in conformance with their design criteria
- Integrated systems testing qualifications, process, requirements and documentation
- Periodic integrated systems testing
- Retro-integrated systems testing
- Integrated systems testing for modifications

The City of Calgary has determined that a practical interpretation of the 2014 ABC and AFC requirement for commissioning is to request compliance with CAN/ULC S1001. This will provide a consistent application of the requirements and provide owners and designers with a process and documentation method that can be applied from the beginning of construction to avoid issues prior to occupancy. Therefore, any building permits applied for under the 2014 ABC require compliance with this standard.

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