



# Building Standards and Codes

New York State  
Department of State  
Division of Building Standards  
and Codes  
One Commerce Plaza  
99 Washington Avenue, Suite 1160  
Albany, NY 12231-0001  
(518) 474-4073  
Fax: (518) 474-5788  
www.dos.ny.gov

TB-2018-BCNYS

## TECHNICAL BULLETIN

**Code Effective Date:** October 31, 2017<sup>1</sup>  
**Source Document:** 19 NYCRR Part 1221 – BUILDING CONSTRUCTION<sup>2</sup>  
**Topic:** Visible Alarm Notification Devices for Fire Alarm Systems

This document summarizes the requirements for visible alarm notification devices for fire alarm systems. Although most of the requirements for accessibility are found in Chapter 11 of the 2015 International Building Code (2015 IBC), which also requires compliance with ICC A117.1, visible alarm notification devices for fire alarm systems are found in Section 907 of the 2015 IBC and summarized as follows:

*907.5.2.3 Visible Alarms. Visible alarm notification appliances shall be provided in accordance with:*

*907.5.2.3.1 Public use areas and common use areas. Visible alarm notification appliances shall be provided in public use areas and common use areas.*

*Exception: Where employee work areas have audible alarm coverage, the notification appliance circuits serving the employee work areas shall be initially designed with not less than 20-percent spare capacity to account for the potential of adding visible notification appliances in the future to accommodate hearing impaired employee(s).*

*907.5.2.3.2 Groups I-1 and R-1. Group I-1 and R-1 dwelling units and sleeping units in accordance with Table 907.5.2.3.2 shall be provided with a visible alarm notification appliance, activated by both the in-room smoke alarm and the building fire alarm system.*

*907.5.2.3.3 Group R-2. In Group R-2 occupancies required by Section 907 to have a fire alarm system, all dwelling units and sleeping units shall be provided with the capability to support visible alarm notification appliances in accordance with Chapter 10 of ICC A117.1. (...)*

Section 202 of the 2015 IBC provides the following definitions:

- *Common Use: interior or exterior circulation paths, rooms, spaces or elements that are not for public use and are made available for the shared use of two or more people. Examples are break rooms, employee toilet areas or circulation paths.*
- *Employee Work Area: all or any portion of a space used only by employees and only for work. Corridors, toilet rooms, kitchenettes and break rooms are not employee work areas. See “common use” areas.*
- *Public-Use Areas: interior or exterior rooms or spaces that are made available to the general public.*
- *Visible Alarm Notification Appliance: a notification appliance that alerts by the sense of sight.*

**John R. Addario, PE, Director**  
**Division of Building Standards and Codes**

<sup>1</sup> The “Code Effective Date” for this Technical Bulletin is October 31, 2017, which is the effective date of the current version of the New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code (the Uniform Code).

<sup>2</sup> The 2015 International Building Code (2015 IBC) is a publication incorporated by reference in 19 NYCRR Part 1221. The 2017 Uniform Code Supplement is a publication incorporated by reference in 19 NYCRR Parts 1219 through 1228. The 2015 IBC, as amended by the 2017 Uniform Code Supplement is part of the Uniform Code.