

FSM Briefing 2016 Common FAQs

- 1) The maintenance cost for addressable fire alarm system costs much higher than conventional system. Are there any controls for cost?

Ans: The maintenance cost for addressable fire alarm is proprietary; therefore it is understandable to be high. A potential alternative would be to look at the design point of view if the cost for installing an addressable fire alarm system is too high.

- 2) The location of the AA to be 1 building's height away might be too far for the elderly or PWDs and there might be space constraints like roads, other buildings etc.

Ans: On this area, the guidelines speak of the requirements in 2 ways. Firstly a prescriptive requirement and secondly a performance-based requirement. If the prescriptive requirement is not achievable, the guidelines states that "...alternately, it (the AA) can be in a protected area shielded from the burning building by a fire barrier or fire wall, or it may be in an adjacent building if it offers sufficient protection and is able to accommodate the evacuees" In selecting a suitable AA, FSMs should ensure that it can keep the evacuees safe.

- 3) Some KEDs can stretch horizontally and vertically for long distances. Is it possible to do partial cleaning only due to the high costs?

Ans: If it is only cleaned partially, the grease will still accumulate at 1 point, and will still be a potential fire hazard. Furthermore NEA regulations specify that the whole ducting system must be cleaned. If the cost of clean is really high, alternative cleaning solutions can be explored.

- 4) If the KED intrudes into the area of other tenants, how should the responsibility of cleaning the KED be shared then?

Ans: Who should bear the cost for cleaning? That depends on the tenancy agreement between owner and tenant, they have to review their agreement to decide. For SCDF, we can go after either owner or tenant if KED is not cleaned.

- 5) Under normal circumstances occupants will evacuate to the ground floor, can they go to roof top instead?

Ans: Under NFPA recommendation, the answer is no. The general rule of thumb is to evacuate downwards, or to other compartments. This will be the case when planning for evacuation in the ERP. However in an actual situation there may be conditions that demand that we react, evaluate and decide on alternative course of actions to ensure personal life-safety.

- 6) Why is there a need for FSMs to pay to get the fire report from SCDF?

Ans: Owners/insurance co. who are directly affected by the fires are usually the parties to purchase the fire report, in order to facilitate insurance claims. It is important that SCDF safe guard all the confidential information (as gate keeper) and ensure that only the rightful parties get the Fire Report.

- 7) If the KED has signs of smoke and fire, are there any mitigation measures that people can take?

Ans: If the terminal point is on the roof, it is possible to introduce water from the top using a hose reel or connect hoses from the landing valve. However, too much water will cause the KED to collapse and if there are multiple outlets (shared kitchen exhaust) care shall be taken to prevent fire spread as oil floats on water.

- 8) Why does the fire alarm have to be sounded for 3 min before being silenced?

Ans: This is to prevent the alarm from being silenced prematurely and to ensure that proper investigation is carried out to find the cause of the alarm.

- 9) How long a duration do premises have to investigate when the fire alarm sound?

Ans: The typical allowance is 2 mins before the decam company activates SCDF. The premises should put in place a system of checks should an alarm activate using the Fire Warden to investigate and report to the FCC of their findings through handphone or the 2 way voice comm. system that may be available in the building.

- 10) Can the announcement be played during the sounding of the alarm?

Ans: For buildings with approved Emergency Voice Communication system, the alarm bell shall sound for a minimum of 15 sec. as an alert signal, followed by a switching facility to silence the alarm only when the loudspeakers are in use for fire/emergency announcements. Alarm bells shall not be sounded during announcement in order to provide a clear, concise and intelligible message quality.

- 11) Why is SCDF being harsh by issuing NFSOs to the FSMs and not the building owner?

Ans: The minimum responsibility of FSMs is to perform the duties stated in the regulations. SCDF will only take action if the FSM is found negligent after a thorough investigation. In the case whereby the FSM is issued with an NFSO, the building owner will probably be issued with a higher penalty as well for failing to ensure the compliance of FSM duties.

- 12) Is it mandatory for the AA to be at least 20m away from the premises?

Ans: Yes. This minimum distance is required to ensure the assembly area does not impede SCDF's basic firefighting operations.