



**OKLAHOMA
BURGLAR AND FIRE ALARM
ASSOCIATION**

TRANSMITTER

Protecting the people of Oklahoma

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Hot Topic

Why lengthy plan reviews?

Issue: The Oklahoma Burglar & Fire Alarm Association is working with Jon Roberts, State Fire Marshal's Office fire alarm plan reviewer, to resolve issues surrounding the extended review time for fire alarm and fire sprinkler projects. The following was gleaned from an interview with Mr. Roberts about these issues.



Q: Where has the plan-review process been and where is it going?



Jon Roberts
Fire Marshal's office

A: When I came on board with this agency over two years ago, I walked in with two months of plan reviews waiting for me. I started out behind the eight ball. Since then, I have been the only full-time person who reviews all of the fire alarm and sprinkler plans for all unincorporated areas of the state – a task that is only part of my overall position.

We also review plans from other areas that may have their own code officials who do not review fire sprinkler or fire alarm plans.

We have employed different strategies in order to gain some ground when it comes to plan reviews, including the recent addition of two part-time contract personnel to assist in the review process. We hope this strategy will make

a significant difference in the review time. However, this may be only a short-term fix.

Q: We all pay plan-review fees. Where do those monies go? Can our plan review fees be used to hire additional staff?

A: The current plan-review fees are already allotted for operating costs of this agency – including the two contract personnel. The part-time employees have helped, but it would be better to have additional full-time personnel. The only way this agency can get more personnel is through additional funding, which can only be provided through the Legislature.

Q: Should we contact our legislators?

A: As an association that is within your

rights. I would appreciate it that if you do contact them, you convey we are working hard to complete your plans. However, the workload is more than current personnel can handle.

(Each newsletter will tackle a “hot topic,” as provided by members. This one is from Paul Conrady, past OKBFAA president. If you have a burning issue for us to address, please email wandalday@yahoo.com)

Oklahoma State
Fire Marshal's Office
<http://www.firemar.state.ok.us>



Plan-review sometimes takes months at the state level for fire alarm and sprinkler projects. What can be done?

The OKBFAA board is pleased to announce the annual association meeting this year will be held at the Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum.

“This is an outstanding venue for any event, but is of particular importance to our industry,” said Mike Nelson, OKBFAA president. Please plan on attending and getting involved

Look for your invitation in the mail in August.

Annual meeting

6-9:45 p.m.

Friday, Oct. 17

Oklahoma City National
Memorial & Museum

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paul@edmondsecurity.com

Contact us:
**Wanda Day, executive director, OKB-
FAA**
P.O. Box 702773
Tulsa, OK 74170-2773
(918) 231-1696
wandalday@yahoo.com

www.okbfaa.com

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Office staff: Please route this newsletter to the company's owner or primary manager.

From the President

Category change increases labor pool



Mike Nelson
President

We're half way through 2008, and Oklahoma's alarm industry has already seen some impressive changes. One such change, prompted by OKBFAA, is the modification of the "trainee" category through the State Alarm and Locksmith Advisory

Committee.

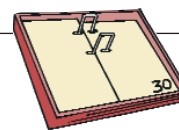
In response to a significant labor shortage, the Association proposed licensed trainees, who have background checks, be allowed to do work on rough-in cabling or wiring without direct supervision. The Advisory Committee approved this rules change and, as of July 11, it is no longer necessary to have a full licensee on site to supervise a trainee during the rough-in or pre-wire stage.

Rest assured. The manager's responsibility to the consumer has not changed. Individuals who have a trainee license are permitted to only "engage in the rough-in cabling or wiring under the indirect supervision of a licensed company holding the appropriate license category."

A second rule change allows new employees to start in the field sooner. The rules now state that in order for temporary licensure of a trainee, they must provide a license application and a current criminal history record check from the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation, or other applicable agency, within 30 days of the application. The application must include two completed fingerprint cards and two passport photos. Temporary licenses are valid for 90 days.

Trainees still must undergo a background check, but their employers are now able to employ technicians who are capable of doing the work needed to ensure a timely install.

The position paper that prompted this rules change, along with the need for communication with the State Fire Marshal's office, as outlined on page 1, began as a discussion during an OKBFAA meeting. This "meeting of the minds" has brought to light the concerns, questions and needs that we, as an industry, face.



Calendar

2008 NESA Certification Classes

**Burglary, Codes/Standards with
electronics, Fire, CCTV/Access Control**
Sept. 5-7; Nov. 7-9

Best Western, Stroud

The NESA program expands your knowledge of the constantly evolving world of electronic security and life-safety systems. Classes will be available if 10 or more students are enrolled. For more information and registration, please visit www.okbfaa.com.

OKBFAA Meetings

Unless otherwise notified, OKBFAA meetings and board meetings are held bimonthly at the Best Western, Stroud: 1200 N. 8th Avenue (Exit 179, Turner Turnpike) (918) 968-9515

Next Member Meeting

9:30 a.m. August 7

Annual meeting

6 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

Oct. 17, Oklahoma City
National Memorial & Museum

State Advisory Board Meetings

Alarm & Locksmith Advisory Committee
State Department of Health, Room 806
1000 N.E. 10th Street, Oklahoma City

9 a.m. August 6
9 a.m. September 3

Do you have a question?

This is the seventh issue of our revamped newsletter, *Transmitter*. You will see it every other month.

Throughout this issue, we asked experts and others those questions we feel address the most pressing needs of the industry.

I welcome comments and questions for which you would like us to get the answers. Send them to Mike Nelson, association president, at P.O. Box 702733, Tulsa, OK 74170-2773.

Thank you for your comments, all positive in regard to the newsletter. Keep them coming.

Scholarship winners selected

OKBFAA is proud to announce its 2008 Scholarship recipients: Jordan Williams, Edmond, \$1,000 (industry); Taylor Nelson, Norman, \$500 (industry); Jordan Murray, Hydro, \$1,000 (police department); and Lorre Roberson, Coweta, \$500 (fire department).

OKBFAA offers scholarships annually to students who have been accepted for admission to an accredited college, university, vo-tech or community college.

The parent, guardian or applicant must be an active employee of a licensed alarm company, member of the police department, or a paid or volunteer member of a fire department, located in Oklahoma. Scholarships range from \$1,000 to \$500 per student. "We like to award these scholarships, but we would like to have more applicants from our association members," said Carol Fletcher, committee chair.

For complete application and deadline information, please visit www.okbfaa.com/scholarship_info.html

Check with police department

Many smaller communities are requiring alarm companies to submit to law enforcement agencies permit information to show legitimacy and a license. This is to curb false-alarm occurrences. The police know who to go to if there is a problem with false alarms.

Check with the law enforcement agencies to see if this policy is mandated to ensure compliance. For more information, please contact Day at (918) 231-1696 or wandalday@yahoo.com.

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OK-435

RJ-31X jack easily learned

I receive quite a few questions about line seizure and the RJ-31X jack during NESA classes. While I believe this is the most difficult device to comprehend initially, once it's learned, it's like riding a bike.

An RJ-31X jack's job is to facilitate the wiring of an alarm panel and telephone on the same phone line while ensuring that the processing of alarm signals has priority (line seizure) over a voice call. Once it's installed, it's imperative to test the jack to verify the correct wiring and installation. Use your telephone or test set to monitor the signals on the jack as follows:



Jordon Brown
OKBFAA
Instructor

1. During a non-alarm condition, a dial tone should be present on input terminals 4 and 5 and output terminals 1 and 2. Remember to set the test set to the "monitor" position, as the "talk" position creates an off-hook condition that may interfere with the dialer. Most test sets are equipped with red and black insulators on the five-way clips as a reminder of the correct polarity for the green/red pair and the black/yellow pairs.

2. Verify telephone set disconnects during an alarm by connecting the test set to output terminals 1 and 8 and verify the dial tone goes dead during an alarm.

3. You can monitor the entire process by connecting the test set to terminals 4 and 5.

4. Test for unauthorized wiring ahead of the RJ-31X by unplugging the phone line from the dialer but leave the patch cord plugged into the RJ-31X. Listen for a dial tone on all phones connected to the circuit. Any phone with a dial tone is improperly connected ahead of the RJ-31X jack and must be rewired to the output terminals.

5. If you have a two-line system, repeat the process for the second line.

("Educator's Corner" addresses questions frequently asked of OKBFAA instructors. This month features Jordon Brown, regional manager for Guard Tronic Inc. He holds Oklahoma licenses in Monitor Manager, Burglar Manager, Commercial Fire Manager, CCTV Manager, Electronic Access Control Manager and Nurse-Call Manager. A second-generation alarm company employee, he has been teaching licensing courses for 10 years and averages 30 classes per year. What question do you have of our educators? Email wandalday@yahoo.com)

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Member Profile

Unusual start for Astro

Karen Meshew frequently tells employees she's going back "out in the field."

"I did a lot of field work when the company was started," Meshew said.

That may have been in the early '80s, but she is still heavily involved in the day-to-day operations of Astro Alarms in Shawnee.

Founded by her late husband Don, Astro Alarms is fully licensed in residential and commercial industries. The company also handles installation of central vacuum systems. When her husband began the business, Meshew helped out and, gradually, two of the couple's sons – Steve and Clifford – were indoctrinated into the business. Clifford has since transitioned to installation of commercial refrigeration equipment.

"Steve followed in his father's footsteps and became licensed about 15 years ago," she said. "He enjoys working with his hands."

The Meshew family and Astro Alarms are a fixture in Shawnee, with most of the family having lived there for some time. In fact, Meshew has been a resident about 60 years.



Karen and Steve Meshew, Astro Alarms in Shawnee

What's surprising is the company didn't originally begin as an alarm company.

"We started selling and installing central vacuum systems in the 1970s," she said. "The line of vacuums that we sold was named Astro. The vacuum company wanted us to use their name as part of the name of our business, so we did. When Don began the alarm business, he stuck with the name Astro because it was one of the first ones in the phone book."

The company has grown from a small family business to a successful company employing two technicians, one trainee and an office administrator, in addition to Meshew. The family has grown as well: Meshew has three children, four grandchildren and a grand-dog.

To be considered for a "Member Profile," please call 918-231-1696 or e-mail wandalday@yahoo.com.)

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