PRESS RELEASE

TOPIC: Safety and Code Requirements

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TALKING AUDIO DISTRIBUTION AND ITS IMPACT ON SAFETY

(Las Vegas, NV) The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) invited Lencore, a Long Island, NY manufacturer of commercial audio distribution, mass notification, sound masking, and paging systems, to speak to its members on safety and code requirements at its 2018 annual conference. Jonathan Leonard, President, Lencore, and Glenn Dahl, Vice-President Engineering, Lencore, delivered the presentation *Audio Distribution: Sound Masking and It's Impact on Safety* to a crowded room. Lencore emphasized the importance of shutting down ambient background sound in the event of an emergency in order to avoid any conflict of signals and to help easily direct building occupants to safety. "In the event of an emergency, according to NFPA 72 code, notification and direction must be clearly understood in order to direct people to safety," stated Leonard. "Furthermore, think of those with disabilities. The ADA is very serious about code enforcement for those with disabilities, including people who are either hearing impaired or vision impaired. It is paramount to ensure that there are no competing audio signals, including sound masking, or waterfalls, which can be both disorienting and mask all speech, which then can make it very difficult to understand where to go and what to do." Life safety code is all about directing people to safety and keeping people safe.

A mass notification system is a system that is required by NFPA 72 code, a code adopted and mentioned in the IFC and IBC, to deliver an intelligible audio message to everyone for fire and non-fire emergencies. Having a proper system is more important today than ever. By code, a mass notification system must reach everyone. NFPA 101 and NFPA 72 code states that announcements must be heard over ambient sound levels and not have conflicting signals. Further, provisions in the code are made available to

override a fire system's normal applications in the case where a fire alarm is the wrong signal or course of action. Think of active shooter situations where a fire alarm may worsen the immediate crisis.

Sound Masking Systems are designed to mask speech to help offices with comfort and productivity, and a properly working sound masking system can interfere with a life safety message. The powers at NFPA, in their wisdom and experience, forsaw this and require ambient signals to be shut down if it may potentially interfere with the intelligibility of the life safety message.

To also meet the spirit and intent, the ADA, ADAAB and NFPA code ensures everyone emergency information and egress. Proper design and meeting compliance is a must.

Underwriters Laboratories (UL) and NFPA developed a standard to help building owners, property managers and contractors, know if a product or system can connect with a fire alarm control panel and meet the standard for mass notification. This standard is the UL 2572 standard and should be required on any audio product working with a life or fire system.

Dahl spoke about the need and importance of the system design and UL requirements, "The UL requirements are very stringent with a battery of tests from mechanical connections to all electrical, EMI, EMC, ESD, environmental tests and even software reviews. Mass notification systems can annunciate a fire alarm but they also need to be able to suppress the fire alarm in a non-fire emergency such as an active shooter situation. This is the criticality for the UL 2572 listing."

Lencore's mass notification system, as well as it's rack mounted sound masking system, meets the very important UL standard 2572 and meets compliance objectives. This UL listing ensures that interconnected products will function properly between components and also properly connect with a fire alarm control panel. Products not meeting the appropriate UL standards should not be connected to a fire or life safety control panel.