

## SECTION 510

### EMERGENCY RESPONDER RADIO COVERAGE

**[W][S]510.1 Emergency responder radio coverage in new buildings.** ~~((New buildings shall have a))~~ Approved radio coverage for emergency responders shall be provided within ~~((the))~~ buildings meeting any of the following conditions:

1. High rise buildings:
2. The total building area is 50,000 square feet or more;
3. The total *basement* area is 10,000 square feet or more; or
4. There are floors used for human occupancy more than 30 feet below the finished floor of the lowest level of exit discharge.

The radio coverage system shall be installed in accordance with Sections 510.4 through 510.5.5 of this code and with the provisions of NFPA 1221 (2019), Standard for the Installation, Maintenance and Use of Emergency Services Communications Systems. ~~((based upon the existing coverage levels of the public safety communication systems utilized by the jurisdiction, measured at the exterior of the building.))~~ This section shall not require improvement of the existing public safety communication systems.

#### **Point of Information**

When determining if the minimum signal strength referenced 510.4.1.1 exists at a subject building, the signal strength shall be measured at any point on the exterior of the building up to the highest point on the roof

#### **Exceptions:**

~~((1. Where approved by the building official and the *fire code official*, a wired communication system in accordance with Section 907.2.12.2 shall be permitted to be installed or maintained instead of an approved radio coverage system.))~~

~~((2))~~1. Where it is determined by the *fire code official* that the radio coverage system is not needed.))Buildings and areas of buildings that have minimum radio coverage signal strength levels of the King County Regional 800 MHz Radio System within the building in accordance with Section 510.4.1 without the use of a radio coverage system.

~~((3))~~2. In facilities where emergency responder radio coverage is required and such systems, components or equipment required could have a negative impact on the normal operations of that facility, the *fire code official* shall have the authority to accept an automatically activated emergency responder radio coverage system.

3. One- and two-family dwellings and townhouses.

**510.2 Emergency responder radio coverage in existing buildings.** Existing buildings shall be provided with *approved* radio coverage for emergency responders as required in Chapter 11.

**510.3 Permit required.** A construction permit for the installation of or modification emergency responder radio coverage systems and related equipment is required as specified in Section 105.7.6. Maintenance performed in accordance with this code is not considered a modification and does not require a permit.

**Point of Information**

Prior coordination and approval from the Public Safety Radio System Operator is required before installation of an Emergency Responder Radio System. Until 2022, such approval is required from [EPSCA](#), [King County](#), [Seattle](#) or [ValleyCom](#) depending on the location of the installation. In 2022 PSERN will be the single operator of a county wide system.

In order to be forward compatible, designers and contractors should be aware of PSERN's requirements for Distributed Antenna Systems which can be found via <https://psern.org/requirements/>

[W][S]510.4 **Technical requirements.** (~~Equipment required to provide emergency responder radio coverage shall be listed in accordance with UL 2524.~~) Systems, components, and equipment required to provide emergency responder radio coverage systems shall comply with Sections 511.4.1 through 511.4.2.8.

[S]510.4.1 **Emergency responder communication enhancement system signal strength.** The building shall be considered to have acceptable emergency responder communication system coverage when signal strength measurements in ~~(95)~~90 percent of all areas on each floor of the building meet the signal strength requirements in Sections 510.4.1.1 through 510.4.1.3.

**Exception:** Critical areas, such as the fire command center(s), the fire pump room(s), interior exit stairways, exit passageways, elevator lobbies, standpipe cabinets, sprinkler sectional valve locations, and other areas required by the fire code official, shall be provided with 99 percent floor area radio coverage

[W][S]510.4.1.1 **Minimum signal strength into the building.** The minimum inbound signal strength shall be sufficient to provide usable voice communications throughout the coverage area as specified by the *fire code official*. The inbound signal level shall be a minimum of -95dbm in 95 percent of the coverage area and 99 percent in critical areas (~~throughout the coverage area~~) and sufficient to provide not less than a Delivered Audio Quality (DAQ) of 3.0 or an equivalent Signal- in critical to-Interference-Plus-Noise Ratio (SINR) applicable to the technology for either analog or digital signals.

[S]510.4.1.2 **Minimum signal strength out of the building.** The minimum outbound signal strength shall be sufficient to provide usable voice communications throughout the coverage area as specified by the *fire code official*. The inbound signal level shall be sufficient to provide not less than a Delivered Audio Quality (DAQ) of 3.0 or an equivalent SINR applicable to the technology for either analog or digital signals. A minimum signal strength of -95 dBm shall be received by the King County Regional 800 MHz Radio System when transmitted from within the building.

[S]510.4.1.3 **System performance.** Signal strength shall be sufficient to meet the requirements of the applications being utilized by public safety for emergency operations through the coverage area as specified by the (~~fire code official~~) Public Safety Radio System Operator in Section 510.4.2.2.

[S]510.4.2 **System design.** The emergency responder radio coverage system shall be designed in accordance with Sections 510.4.2.1 through 510.4.2.8 and NFPA 1221(2019).

[W][S]510.4.2.1 **Amplification systems and components.** Buildings and structures that cannot support the required level of radio coverage shall be equipped with systems and components to enhance the public safety radio signals and achieve the required level of radio coverage specified in Sections 510.4.1 through 510.4.1.3. Public safety communications enhancement systems utilizing radio frequency-emitting devices and cabling shall be (~~approved~~) allowed by the (~~fire code official~~) Public Safety

Radio System Operator. Prior to installation, all RF-emitting devices shall have the certification of the ~~((radio licensing authority))~~ Public Safety Radio System Operator and be suitable for public safety use.

**[S]510.4.2.2 Technical criteria.** The ~~((fire code official))~~ Public Safety Radio System Operator shall ~~((maintain a document providing the specific technical information and requirements for the emergency responder communications coverage system. This document shall contain, but not be limited to,))~~ provide the various frequencies required, the location of radio sites, the effective radiated power of radio sites, the maximum propagation delay in microseconds, the applications being used and other supporting technical information necessary for system design upon request by the building owner or owner's representative.

**[S]510.4.2.3 ((Standby)) Power supply sources.** Emergency responder radio coverage systems shall be provided with dedicated standby batteries or provided with 2-hour standby batteries and connected to the facility generator power system in accordance with Section 1203. The standby power supply shall be capable of operating the emergency responder radio coverage system at 100-percent system capacity for a duration of not less than least 12 hours.

**[W][S]510.4.2.4 Signal booster requirements.** If used, signal boosters shall meet the following requirements:

1. All signal booster components shall be contained in a National Electrical Manufacturer's Association (NEMA) 4, IP66-type waterproof cabinet or equivalent.  
**Exception:** Listed battery systems that are contained in integrated battery cabinets.
2. Battery systems used for the emergency power source shall be contained in a NEMA 3R or higher-rated cabinet, IP65-type waterproof cabinet or equivalent.
3. Equipment shall have FCC or other radio licensing authority certification and be suitable for public safety use prior to installation.
4. Where a donor antenna exists, isolation shall be maintained between the donor antenna and all inside antennas to not less than 20dB greater than the system gain under all operating conditions.
5. Bi-Directional Amplifiers (BDAs) used in emergency responder radio coverage systems shall ~~((have))~~ be fitted with anti-oscillation circuitry and per-channel AGC. ~~((oscillation prevention circuitry.))~~
6. The installation of amplification systems or systems that operate on or provide the means to cause interference on any emergency responder radio coverage networks shall be coordinated and approved by the ~~((fire code official))~~ Public Safety Radio System Operator.
7. Unless otherwise approved by the Public Safety Radio System Operator, only channelized signal boosters shall be permitted.  
**Exception:** Broadband BDA's may be utilized when specifically authorized in writing by the Public Safety Radio System Operator.

**Point of Information**

BDA's must also comply with PSERN's (www.psern.org/requirements) detailed requirements, which include channelized, minimum of 28 channels, supporting analog, P25 Phase I (FDMA), and P25 Phase II (TDMA).

**[S]510.4.2.5 System monitoring.** The emergency responder radio enhancement system shall include automatic supervisory and trouble signals that are monitored by a supervisory service and are annunciated by the fire alarm system in accordance with NFPA 72 ~~((be monitored by a listed fire alarm control unit, or where approved by the fire code official, shall sound an audible signal at a constantly attended on-site~~

~~location~~)). ~~((Automatic supervisory signals shall include the))~~ The following conditions shall be separately annunciated by the fire alarm system, or, if the status of each of the following conditions is individually displayed on a dedicated panel on the radio enhancement system, a single automatic supervisory signal may be annunciated on the fire alarm system indicating deficiencies of the radio enhancement system:

1. Loss of normal AC power supply.
2. System battery charger(s) failure.
3. Malfunction of the donor antenna(s).
4. Failure of active RF-emitting device(s).
5. Low-battery capacity at 70-percent reduction of operating capacity.
6. ~~((Failure of critical system components))~~ Active system component malfunction.
7. Malfunction of ~~((F))~~ the communications link between the *fire alarm system* and the emergency responder radio enhancement system.

**510.4.2.6 Additional frequencies and change of frequencies.** The emergency responder radio coverage system shall be capable of modification or expansion in the event frequency changes are required by the FCC or other radio licensing authority, or additional frequencies are made available by the FCC or other radio licensing authority.

**510.4.2.7 Design documents.** The *fire code official* shall have the authority to require “as-built” design documents and specifications for emergency responder communications coverage systems. The documents shall be in a format acceptable to the *fire code official*.

**510.4.2.8 Radio communication antenna density.** Systems shall be engineered to minimize the near-far effect. Radio enhancement system designs shall include sufficient antenna density to address reduced gain conditions.

**Exceptions:**

1. Class A narrow band signal booster devices with independent AGC/ALC circuits per channel.
2. Systems where all portable devices within the same band use active power control features.

**[W][S]510.5 Installation requirements.** The installation of the public safety radio coverage system shall be in accordance with NFPA 1221 and Sections 510.5.1 through 510.5.~~((4))~~7.

**[S]510.5.1 Approval prior to installation.** Amplification systems capable of operating on frequencies licensed to any public safety agency by the FCC or other radio licensing authority shall not be installed without prior coordination and approval of the ~~((fire code official))~~ Public Safety Radio System Operator.

**[S]510.5.2 Minimum qualifications of personnel.** The minimum qualifications of the system designer and lead ~~((installation))~~ acceptance test personnel shall include both of the following:

1. A valid FCC-issued general radio telephone operators license.
2. Certification of in-building system training issued by an approved organization or approved school, or a certificate issued by the manufacturer of the equipment being installed.

~~((These qualifications shall not be required where demonstration of adequate skills and experience satisfactory to the fire code official is provided.))~~

**[S]510.5.3 Acceptance test procedure and system certification.** When an emergency responder radio coverage system is required, and upon completion of installation, the building *owner* shall have the radio system tested to verify that two-way coverage on each floor of the building is in accordance with Section 510.4.1. ((not less than 95 percent)). The test procedure shall be conducted as follows

1. Each floor of the building shall be divided into a grid of 20 approximately equal test areas, with a maximum test area size area of 6,400 square feet. Where the floor area exceeds 128,000 square feet, the floor shall be divided into as many approximately equal test areas as needed, such that no test area exceeds the maximum square footage allowed for a test area.
2. ~~((The test shall be conducted using a calibrated portable radio of the latest brand and model used by the agency talking through the agency's radio communications system or equipment approved by the fire code official.))~~ Coverage testing of signal strength shall be conducted using a calibrated spectrum analyzer for each of the test grids. A diagram of this testing shall be created for each floor where coverage is provided, indicating the testing grid used for the test in Section 510.5.3(1), and including signal strengths and frequencies for each test area. Indicate all critical areas.
3. ~~((Failure of more than one test area shall result in failure of the test.))~~ Functional talk-back testing shall be conducted using two calibrated portable radios of the latest brand and model used by the agency's radio communications system or other equipment approved by the fire code official. Testing shall use Digital Audible Quality (DAQ) metrics, where a passing result is a DAQ of 3 or higher. Communications between handsets shall be tested and recorded in the grid square diagram required by section 510.5.3(2); each grid square on each floor; between each critical area and a radio outside the building; between each critical area and the fire command center or fire alarm control panel; between each landing in each stairwell and the fire command center or fire alarm panel.
4. Failure of more than 5 percent of the test areas on any floor shall result in failure of the test.  
**Exception:** Critical areas shall be provided with 99 percent floor area radio coverage.
5. In the event that two of the test areas fail the test, in order to be more statistically accurate, the floor shall be permitted to be divided into 40 equal test areas. Failure of not more than two nonadjacent test areas shall not result in failure of the test. If the system fails the 40-area test, the system shall be altered to meet the 95-percent coverage requirement.
6. A test location approximately in the center of each test area shall be selected for the test, with the radio enabled to verify two-way communications to and from the outside of the building through the public agency's radio communications system. Once the test location has been selected, that location shall represent the entire test area. Failure in the selected test location shall be considered to be a failure of that test area. Additional test locations shall not be permitted.
7. The gain values of all amplifiers shall be measured and the test measurement results shall be kept on file with the building *owner* so that the measurements can be verified during annual tests. In the event that the measurement results become lost, the building owner shall be required to rerun the acceptance test to reestablish the gain values.

8. As part of the installation, a spectrum analyzer or other suitable test equipment shall be utilized to ensure spurious oscillations are not being generated by the subject signal booster. This test shall be conducted at time of installation and at subsequent annual inspections.
9. Systems incorporating Class B signal-booster devices or Class B broadband fiber remote devices shall be tested using two portable radios simultaneously conducting subjective voice quality checks. One portable radio shall position not greater than 10 feet (3048mm) from the indoor antenna. The second portable radio shall be positioned at a distance that represents the farthest distance from any indoor antenna. With both portable radios simultaneously keyed up on different frequencies within the same band, subjective audio testing shall be conducted and comply with DAQ levels as specified in Sections 510.4.1.1 and 510.4.1.2.
10. Documentation maintained on premises. At the conclusion of the testing, and prior to issuance of the building Certificate of Occupancy, the building owner or owner's representative shall place a copy of the following records in the DAS enclosure or the building engineer's office. The records shall be available to the fire code official and maintained by the building owner for the life of the system:
  - a. A certification letter stating that the emergency responder radio coverage system has been installed and tested in accordance with this code, and that the system is complete and fully functional.
  - b. The grid square diagram created as part of testing in Sections 510.5.3(2) and 510.5.3(3).
  - c. Data sheets and/or manufacturer specifications for the emergency responder radio coverage system equipment; back up battery; and charging system (if utilized).
  - d. A diagram showing device locations and wiring schematic,
  - e. A copy of the electrical permit.
11. Acceptance test reporting to fire code official. At the conclusion of the testing, and prior to issuance of the building Certificate of Occupancy, the building owner or owner's representative shall submit to the fire code official a report of the acceptance test by way of the department's third-party vendor [thecomplianceengine.com](http://thecomplianceengine.com)

**510.5.4 FCC compliance.** The emergency responder radio coverage system installation and components shall also comply with all applicable federal regulations including, but not limited to, FCC 47 CFR Part 90.219.

**[W]510.5.5 Mounting of the donor antenna(s).** To maintain proper alignment with the system designed donor site, donor antennas shall be permanently affixed on the highest possible position on the building or where approved by the fire code official. A clearly visible sign stating "Movement or repositioning of this antenna is prohibited without approval from the fire code official". The antenna installation shall be in accordance with the applicable requirements in the International Building Code for weather protection of the building envelope.

**[S]510.5.6 Wiring.** The backbone, antenna distribution, radiating, or any fiber-optic cables shall be rated as plenum cables. The backbone cables shall be connected to the antenna distribution, radiating, or copper cables using hybrid coupler devices of a value determined by the overall design. Backbone cables shall be routed through an enclosure that matches the building's required fire-resistance rating for shafts or interior exit stairways. The connection between the backbone cable and the antenna cables shall be made within an enclosure that matches the building's fire-resistance rating for shafts or interior exit stairways, and passage of the antenna distribution cable in and out of the enclosure shall be protected as a penetration per the International Building Code.

**[S]510.5.7 Identification Signs.** Emergency responder radio coverage systems shall be identified by an approved sign located on or near the Fire Alarm Control Panel or other approved location stating "This building is equipped with an Emergency Responder Radio Coverage System. Control Equipment located in room". A

sign stating “Emergency Responder Radio Coverage System Equipment” shall be placed on or adjacent to the door of the room containing the main system components.

[W][S]510.6 Maintenance. The emergency responder radio coverage system shall be maintained operational at all times in accordance with Sections 510.6.1 through 510.6.7 (~~510.6.4.~~)

[W][S]510.6.1 Testing and proof of compliance. The owner of the building or owner’s authorized agent shall have the emergency radio coverage system (~~shall be~~) inspected and tested annually or whenever structural changes occur including additions or remodels that could materially change the original field performance tests. Testing shall consist of the following items (1) through (7):

1. In-building coverage test as required by the fire code official as described in Section 510.5.3 “Acceptance test procedure” or 510.6.1.1 “Alternative in-building coverage test”. (~~or as required by the fire code official.~~)  
**Exception:** Group R Occupancy annual testing is not required within dwelling units.
2. Signal boosters shall be tested to ensure that the gain/output level is the same as it was upon initial installation and acceptance.
3. Backup batteries and power supplies shall be tested under load of a period of one hour to verify that they will properly operate during an actual power outage. If within the 1-hour test period the battery exhibits symptoms of failure, the test shall be extended for additional 1-hour periods until the integrity of the battery can be determined.
4. If a fire alarm system is present in the building, a test shall be conducted to verify that the fire alarm system is properly supervising the emergency responder communication system as required in Section 510.4.2.5. The test is performed by simulating alarms to the fire alarm control panel. The certifications in Section 510.5.2 are sufficient for the personnel performing this testing.
5. All other active components shall be checked to verify operation within the manufacturer’s specifications.
6. At the conclusion of the testing, a report, which shall verify compliance with Section (~~510.5.3~~)510.6.1 shall be submitted to the fire code official by way of the department’s third-party vendor thecomplianceengine.com.
7. At the conclusion of testing, a record of the inspection and maintenance along with an updated grid diagram of each floor showing tested strengths in each grid square and each critical area shall be added to the documentation maintained on the premises in accordance with Section 510.5.3.

**[S]510.6.1.1 Alternative In-building coverage test.** When the comprehensive test documentation required by Section 510.5.3 is available, or the most recent full five-year test results are available if the system is older than six years, the in-building coverage test required by the fire code official in Section 510.6.1(1), may be conducted as follows:

1. Functional talk-back testing shall be conducted using two calibrated portable radios of the latest brand and model used by the agency’s radio communications system or other equipment approved by the fire code official. Testing shall use Digital Audible Quality (DAQ) metrics, where a passing result is a DAQ of 3 or higher. Communications between handsets in the following locations shall be tested: between the fire command center or fire alarm control panel and a location outside the building; between the fire alarm control panel and each landing in each stairwell.
2. Coverage testing of signal strength shall be conducted using a calibrated spectrum analyzer for:
  - (a) Three grid areas per floor. The three grid areas to be tested on each floor are the three grid areas with poorest performance in the acceptance test or the most recent annual test, whichever is more recent; and

(b) Each of the critical areas identified in acceptance test documentation required by Section 510.5.3, or as modified by the fire code official, and

(c) One grid square per serving antenna.

3. The test area boundaries shall not deviate from the areas established at the time of the acceptance test, or as modified by the fire code official. The building shall be considered to have acceptable emergency responder radio coverage when the required signal strength requirements in 510.4.1.1 and 510.4.1.2 are located in 95 percent of all areas on each floor of the building and 99 percent in Critical Areas, and any non-functional serving antenna are repaired to function within normal ranges. If the documentation of the acceptance test or most recent previous annual test results are not available or acceptable to the fire code official, the radio coverage verification testing described in 510.5.3 shall be conducted.

Point of Information

The alternative in-building coverage test provides an alternative testing protocol for the in-building coverage test in subsection (1) of section 510.6.1. There is no change or alternative to annual testing requirements enumerated in subsections (2) – (7) of Section 510.6.1, which must be performed at the time of each annual test.

**[S]510.6.2 Additional frequencies.** The building *owner* shall modify or expand the emergency responder radio coverage system at their expense in the event frequency changes are required by the FCC or additional frequencies are made available by the FCC Public Safety Radio System Operator or FCC license holder. Prior approval of a public safety radio coverage system on previous frequencies does not exempt this section.

**510.6.3 Nonpublic safety system.** Where other nonpublic safety amplification systems installed in buildings reduce the performance or cause interference with the emergency responder communications coverage system, the nonpublic safety amplification system shall be corrected or removed.

**[S]510.6.4 Field testing.** (~~Agency~~) Seattle Fire Department personnel shall have the right to enter onto the property at any reasonable time to conduct field testing to verify the required level of radio coverage or to disable a system that due to malfunction or poor maintenance has the potential to impact the emergency responder radio system in the region.