

Fire Alarm System

Operation Finally Gets User-Friendly

How the BSIU will change your life for the better

We can all use more simplicity and convenience in our lives – and the right technology can deliver it. After all, what road-tripper wants to fumble around with paper maps when a GPS can guide them perfectly to almost any destination? And who wants to wait in a long supermarket checkout line when we can use an intuitive self-checkout stand and do it faster ourselves?

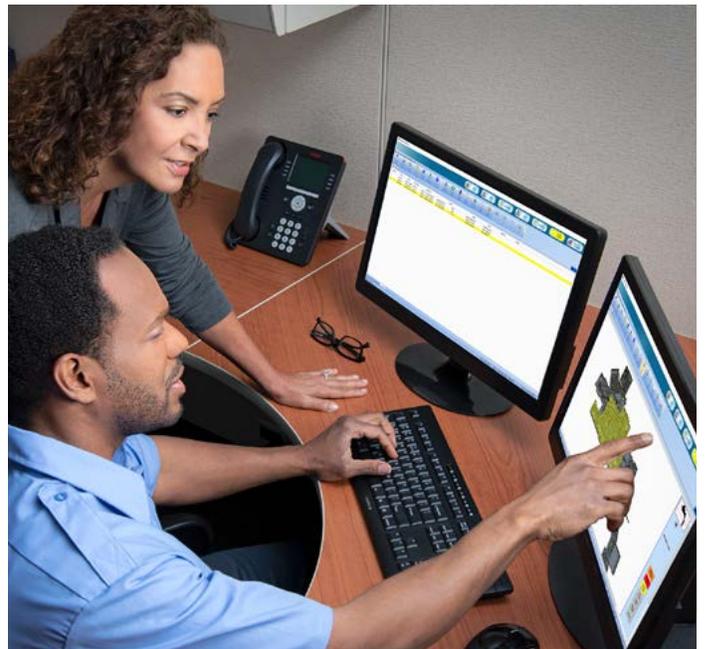
That's the idea behind a new feature added to NFPA 72 in 2019: **the Building Systems Information Unit (BSIU)**. A BSIU is a fire systems operator console that provides you with more – and less costly – options for annunciating events on your fire alarm systems.

Equally important, it brings greater simplicity, convenience and intuitiveness to the operation of even very complex fire alarm systems.

What's a BSIU and what's new about it?

NFPA 72 defines a BSIU as “a computer-based electronic device that is intended to display building information and execute system control functions, including fire system information display and control”. In other words, it's a software-equipped workstation that controls the fire alarm system.

Before 2019, NFPA 72 supported similar operator console hardware and software, but with a big difference: the computer had to be UL 864-listed when used for system control. Because UL 864-listed computers are very costly – especially if multiple consoles were needed – operator consoles were unaffordable for many facilities. With the advent of the BSIU, operators at facilities of all sizes can now reap the benefits of a powerful and intuitive control system.



With a BSIU:

- An elementary or high school can simplify the process of conducting fire drills.
- A manufacturing facility can give operators explicit instructions for servicing the variety of specialized equipment in their fire alarm system environment.
- Operators of fire alarm systems in large distribution facilities can immediately pinpoint the exact location of an affected device in an emergency and respond more efficiently.

The fine print

While NFPA 72's BSIU has opened the door to more intuitive fire alarm system operation, there are a few requirements to ensure code compliance:

- The BSIU must be located in the same room or space as a system fire alarm control unit, which can be either a full control unit, a Network Display Unit (NDU) or a transponder.
- BSIU control operations are limited to the same ones that can be performed by the nearby control unit.
- The BSIU and the control unit have to be independent and each must keep working if the other fails.

There are also limits to a BSIU's functionality:

- It cannot act as a receiver for digital alarm communicator transmitters.
- It cannot act as a smoke control annunciator.

Facilities requiring those capabilities will need to implement a more robust UL 864-listed system.

Next steps: talk to your vendor and AHJ

If a BSIU sounds like a solution you could use, talk to your fire alarm system provider to learn more. At Johnson Controls, we offer our new TrueSite Workstation BSIU software. All customers have to do is purchase the software from us and supply their own computers.

While you're at it, talk to your Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) – most likely a representative of your state fire marshal. Be aware they might not be completely familiar with this type of solution because BSIUs are fairly new.

Smart technologies supported by graphical user interfaces have brought greater ease, convenience, productivity and efficiency to many of life's tasks. With BSIUs, those same benefits are now available to anyone operating a fire alarm system in a facility of any size. And that means greater safety for everyone.

About Johnson Controls

At Johnson Controls, we transform the environments where people live, work, learn and play. From optimizing building performance to improving safety and enhancing comfort, we drive the outcomes that matter most. We deliver our promise in industries such as healthcare, education, data centers, and manufacturing. With a global team of over 100,000 experts in more than 150 countries and over 130 years of innovation experience, we are the power behind our customers' mission. Our leading portfolio of building technology and solutions includes some of the most trusted names in the industry, such as Tyco®, YORK®, *Metasys*®, Ruskin®, Titus®, Frick®, PENN®, Sabroe®, Simplex® and Grinnell®.

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