

2026 Ontario Fire Code Updates



Overview

Ontario is introducing major updates to **Fire Alarm Inspection and Testing requirements** that take effect on **January 1, 2026**. These changes formalize inspection and verification procedures across the province by adopting the national **CAN/ULC-S536-19** standard. Immediate action is required by Property Owners and Building Operators to prepare for the increased rigor and new documentation mandates.

Summary

Regulatory Changes

These changes make fire alarm inspections more **thorough, standardized, and time-intensive**, focusing on **system reliability** and **compliance**:

True Device-Level Testing: The inspection process expands to include more steps for all components, receiving more scrutiny and requiring more documentation.

New Battery Testing Method: Simple voltage checks are no longer acceptable; batteries must now undergo a **functional/load test** with recorded measurements.

Mandatory Report Forms: All annual and monthly reports must use the official, multi-page ULC-prescribed forms; abridged or custom checklists are no longer acceptable.

Clear Deficiencies vs. Recommendations: The standard formally **separates required deficiencies** (must be corrected) from optional recommendations, providing owners with a clear, actionable compliance list.

Attendance & Accountability Requirements: Inspection records must now include specific accountability details: **technician names, dates and times on site**, and **owner/agent acknowledgment**.

Formalized Monthly Logs: Monthly inspection logs must now follow the standardized **ULC format**, becoming part of the formal compliance record reviewed by AHJs.

Next Steps

Inspections will be **more time-intensive**. Buildings should expect **longer service windows** and **deeper documentation** beginning in 2026. Plan budgeting and service scheduling now to accommodate the increased time and rigor.

Navigating the 2026 Ontario Fire Code Updates: What Property Owners Need to Do

As we head into 2026, Ontario is rolling out some of the most significant updates to its Fire Code and Building Code in a generation. For building owners, property managers, and facility operations teams, compliance is no longer just about passing an annual check—it is about modernizing how your systems communicate and protecting your occupants.

At **Futron Technologies**, we believe in making compliance seamless through technology. Here is a clear breakdown of the crucial 2026 changes you need to address immediately.

1. Upgraded Fire Alarm Inspections (CAN/ULC-S536-19)

Ontario has updated its annual fire alarm testing standards to align with **CAN/ULC-S536-19** (and CAN/ULC-S537-19 for new installations).

- **What's New:** Inspections are now significantly more detailed, requiring tighter tolerances and more exhaustive diagnostic testing.
 - **The Impact:** Expect your annual fire alarm testing window to take slightly longer. Quick "walk-through" style checks will not meet the new criteria.
 - **Action Item:** Ensure your service provider is using S536-19 compliant testing templates. Keep all digital and physical records organized in an on-site safety binder.
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2. Expanded Carbon Monoxide (CO) Detection Retrofits

The scope of mandatory carbon monoxide detection has been widened to capture older, existing residential and care occupancies.

- **What's New:** Any building served by a fuel-burning appliance (such as gas furnaces or water heaters) or containing an attached parking garage must now have expanded CO detection.
 - **The Impact:** Landlords and condo corporations must audit and retrofit sleeping areas and adjacent zones.
 - **Action Item:** Install hardwired CO alarms with battery backups where possible, or use approved sealed 10-year battery/plug-in units. Document installation dates, as these devices must be replaced every 7 to 10 years depending on the manufacturer.
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3. Integrated Life-Safety Testing (CAN/ULC-S1001)

If your facility has multiple systems that talk to one another, the provincial code now expects them to prove they can work in harmony.

- **What's New:** Buildings with interconnected fire alarms, emergency generators, elevators, magnetic door releases, and smoke control systems must perform integrated system testing under **CAN/ULC-S1001**.
 - **The Impact:** It is no longer enough for individual components to pass inspection; the entire *chain* of response must function as a single unit. Periodic retesting is required on a 5-year cycle.
 - **Action Item:** Work with an Integrated Testing Coordinator (ITC) to design a custom test plan for your facility's smart infrastructure.
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4. Emergency Lighting & Egress Upgrades

Egress paths must remain highly visible, even in total power failures, to facilitate swift, panic-free evacuations.

- **What's New:** Expanded requirements for emergency lighting coverage along exit paths and new tactile/Braille "EXIT" signage requirements at key egress doors.
 - **The Impact:** Older photoluminescent or non-illuminated signs may need to be upgraded to meet modern visibility and accessibility standards.
 - **Action Item:** Conduct a monthly 30-second functional test and an annual 30-minute battery depletion test of your emergency lighting units. Replace failing battery packs immediately.
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5. Instant Fines: Administrative Monetary Penalties (AMPs)

The province is transitioning away from sluggish court-based enforcement. Fire departments across Ontario now have a much sharper tool at their disposal.

- **What's New:** Under the new AMPs framework, fire inspectors can issue **immediate, on-the-spot fines** for clear-cut violations.
 - **The Impact:** A single locked exit door, a missed inspection log, or an outdated Fire Safety Plan can result in immediate financial penalties.
 - **Action Item:** Treat your facility maintenance like a continuous audit. Keep your Fire Safety Plan updated and ensure staff are trained to retrieve safety logs on demand.
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6. Focus on Doors in Fire Separations and Means of Egress (OFC Sections 2.2 and 2.7)

- **What's New:** Under Section 2.2, all doors located in fire separations must be inspected monthly, regardless of whether the door is normally used by occupants or remains closed under typical conditions. In addition, Section 2.7 introduces expanded requirements for doors forming part of a means of egress and doors equipped with electromagnetic locking devices, requiring monthly inspections and annual testing with formal records maintained.

- **The Impact:** For many buildings, this represents a significant increase in both inspection scope and documentation expectations, bringing doors that may not previously have been captured in routine checks clearly into the Fire Code's inspection and testing framework.
- **Action Item:** Audit all doors in fire separations and egress routes, establish a monthly log schedule, and schedule annual testing for electromagnetic locking devices to maintain full compliance.

Quick Compliance Checklist

System Area	2026 Code Requirement	Frequency
Fire Alarms	CAN/ULC-S536-19 Standardized Testing	Annual
CO Alarms	Retrofits in all residential units near fuel/garages	Monthly test / 10-yr replace
Integrated Systems	CAN/ULC-S1001 End-to-End Interconnection Testing	Every 5 Years
Emergency Path	30-min backup lighting + tactile exit signs	Monthly (quick test) / Annual (drain)
FSPs & Logs	Digital or physical records accessible on-site	Continuous update
Egress & Fire Doors	Monthly inspection of fire separation doors; monthly inspection & annual testing of egress/electromagnetic doors	Monthly / Annual

Looking to verify your building's compliance?

Staying ahead of Ontario's shifting regulatory landscape requires a proactive, tech-driven approach. For more context on these provincial updates, you can review the [Ontario Office of the Fire Marshal](#) guidelines or study the official [Toronto Fire Services Prevention Policy](#).

Contact the team at [Futron Technologies](#) today to schedule an inspection audit and keep your facility fully compliant.