

University of Toronto Fire Alarm Alphanumeric Paging System

April 2012

The University of Toronto fire alarm alphanumeric paging system is in place to provide a supplementary fire alarm signal for members of the U of T Community who are Deaf, Deafened and Hard of Hearing. It is the result of several years' efforts in this direction, and is made possible by central monitoring technology that is in place on the St. George Campus.

This overview contains important information. Please ensure that you read it carefully and understand the system's function as well as its limitations.

What does it do?

The paging system provides for alphanumeric paging with vibrating alert capability, sending a text message to all pagers simultaneously whenever a fire alarm is activated on the St. George Campus (see attached list of buildings & corresponding addresses). This text message states the building address of the alarm activation, enabling those with a hearing disability to be made aware of the condition. The pagers are intended to be used within U of T buildings, during waking hours. Their use within residences while sleeping is not recommended since it could disrupt your sleep due to alarms in other buildings (your residence Don should be notified of your hearing impairment so that you can be alerted to alarms in your building at night).

What does it NOT do?

The system is specific to University of Toronto, St. George Campus, and does not include any "Federated Colleges" (i.e. – does NOT include Trinity College, St. Michael's College, Knox College, Victoria College, etc), nor does it include U of T's Scarborough or Mississauga Campuses. The Federated Colleges at U of T each have their own independent fire alarm systems that are not included under the auspices of the U of T Fire Prevention Office. The pagers are NOT for personal use, as they all share a common access number for fire use only. Please see the attached list of buildings that are served by this system. It is your responsibility to be aware of buildings that you may occupy that are NOT covered by this system. As all members of the U of T community must participate in their own personal safety, users are encouraged to supplement the pager system by either alerting a person in the building of his/her presence or using a buddy system for back up to further ensure personal safety.

How many times will my pager be activated per day?

This varies, but can be expected to typically be less than once per day, on average. Pagers will activate during fire alarms and fire drills. Also, pagers all are sent a test page at approximately 8:00 am each day to test the system (one additional page per day). Pagers receive alarms from ALL buildings, not merely the one you're in at the time. A quick glance around you will give you some feedback on if your building is the one affected, even before you check the text message. Fire Prevention Staff also carry these pagers, so we are kept apprised of all pager activations.

Does the pager tell me when the alarm is over?

No. Pagers only activate when an alarm is initiated. Once outside the building, you can either take a visual cue from the other occupants or ask the emergency response crew to let you know when it's safe to re-enter.

How reliable is this system?

So far we have only encountered one time that a pager didn't activate. At that time, the person wearing it was 2 storeys below grade in an area with virtually no reception. These areas exist, but they are typically not used by the public. Pagers are inherently much more reliable than either cell phones or two-way radios, since the transmitter has significantly higher power and is located in an elevated location outdoors.

How can I tell if it's just an alarm test in the building I'm in?

The pager should NOT activate for alarm tests. If your pager indicates the building you're currently in, but nobody else is moving, please seek out administrative staff or faculty to confirm that the signals are not ringing.

Is there a delay in the pagers?

There is a delay of typically 20-30 seconds between fire alarm activation and pager activation. This is the time it takes for our system to deliver the message to the paging provider and subsequently have it broadcast out. Only rarely has the delay exceeded 30 seconds.

Why don't we just have strobe lights instead?

Existing legislation for strobe lights for individuals with hearing disabilities (both in Canada and the United States) falls drastically short of satisfactory coverage. To be effective, strobe lights must be installed so they can be seen either directly or by reflection in *all* areas of buildings. This would include virtually all rooms, as well as in corridors and exits – an extremely difficult, lengthy, and costly undertaking for 100 buildings. Furthermore, many of our fire alarm systems are not capable of being retrofitted with strobe lights and would need to be replaced in order to accommodate this change. More importantly, fire alarm strobe lights have been proven to cause epileptic seizures (this has in fact happened here at U of T), when connected to pre-existing systems. It is not in anyone's best interests to improve fire safety for one group while putting another at increased risk during a fire alarm. For these reasons, strobe lights are clearly not the best option. The Canadian Hearing Society has been consulted on the use of this fire pager notification system and supports its implementation.

Can I turn my pager off whenever I like?

Yes. Pagers are not monitored for power. These have been provided for you to use, but it's your own choice as to when you utilize this system. Messages are not buffered during power-off, - you'll only receive messages that are sent while your pager is on. *Before you turn your pager off* in one of our buildings, please ensure that you are *not* in an isolated location where you would have no visual cues that an alarm was in progress. Also, we recommend that you do *not* use the "private time" function (suppressing activation) since there may be times that you are on campus in buildings after your

regular day (i.e. – in Robarts), and you may forget to deactivate this feature. Manually turning the unit on and off is better in this respect.

List of **University of Toronto – St. George Campus** buildings served by fire alarm paging system:

| Building Address | Building Name |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 King's College Cir. | Medical Sciences Building |
| 1 Spadina Cres. | 1 Spadina Crescent |
| 2 Sussex Ave. | Innis College |
| 4 Bancroft Ave. | 4 Bancroft Ave. |
| 4 Devonshire Pl. | Massey College |
| 4 Glen Morris St. | Glen Morris Theatre |
| 5 King's College Rd. | Mechanical Engineering |
| 6 King's College Cir. Queen's Park | Pratt, D.L. Building |
| 6 Cres. | Tanz Neuroscience |
| 7 Glen Morris St. | Early Learning Centre |
| 7 Hart House Cir. | Hart House |
| 7 King's College Cir. | Sigmund Samuel Library |
| 10 King's College Rd. | Sanford Fleming |
| 11 King's College Rd. | Engineering Annex |
| 12 Hart House Cir. Queen's Park | SAC |
| 12 Cres. Queen's Park | McMurrich Building |
| 14 Cres. | Canadiana Building |
| 15 King's College Cir. | University College |
| 16 Bancroft Ave. | Graduate Students Union |
| 17 Russell St. | Central Steam Plant |
| 19 Russell St. | Anthropology |
| 21 Classic Ave. | Wetmore Hall |
| 21 King's College Cir. | Development & University Relations |
| 21 Sussex Ave. | Campus Police |
| 25 Harbord St. | Zoology |
| 25 Willcocks St. | Earth Sciences Centre |
| 27 King's College Cir. | Simcoe Hall/Con Hall |
| 30 Charles St. West | 30 Charles St. Residence |
| 33 St. George St. | Cumberland House |
| 33 Willcocks St. | Earth Sciences Centre |
| 35 St. George St. | Galbraith Building |
| 35 Charles St. West | 35 Charles St. Residence |
| 39 Queen's Park | 39 Queen's Park |
| 40 St. George St. | BCIT |
| 40 Sussex Ave. | 40 Sussex |
| 40 Willcocks St. | Wilson Hall |
| 41 Willcocks St. | Faculty Club |
| 44 St. George St. | BCIT Old House |
| 45 St. George St. | Physical Geography |
| 45 Walmer Rd. | Inst. Of Child Study |
| 45 Willcocks St. | New College Res. 3 |
| 49 St. George St. | Transitional Year Program |

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| 50 | Sussex Ave. | Northwest Chiller |
| 50 | St. George St. | Astronomy & Astrophysics |
| 55 | Harbord St. | Athletics Complex |
| 56 | Spadina Rd. | Campus Co-op Day Care |
| 60 | Harbord St. | Graduate House |
| 63 | St. George St. | MacDonald-Mowat House |
| 65 | St. George St. | 65 St. George St. |
| 73 | St. George St. | Sir Daniel Wilson |
| 75 | St. George St. | Morrison Hall, UC Residence |
| 78 | Queen's Park | Flavelle House |
| 79 | St. George St. | U.C. Union |
| 80 | Queen's Park | Edward Johnson |
| 80 | St. George St. | Lash Miller |
| 84 | Queen's Park | Falconer Hall |
| 85 | St. George St. | Whitney Hall |
| 88 | College St. | 88 College St. |
| 89 | Chestnut St. | 89 Chestnut Residence |
| 90 | Wellesley St. | 90 Wellesley |
| 92 | College St. | 92 College St. |
| 97 | St. George St. | 97 St. George St. |
| 100 | College St. | Banting Institute |
| 100 | Devonshire Pl. | Woodsworth Annex |
| 100 | St. George St. | Sidney Smith Building |
| 105 | St. George St. | Rotman School of Management |
| 107 | St. George St. | Parking Garage |
| 111 | St. George St. | Innis Residence |
| 112 | College St. | Best Institute |
| 117 | 119 St. George St. | Woodsworth College |
| 121 | St. George St. | 121 St. George St. |
| 123 | St. George St. | 123 St. George St. |
| 124 | Edward St. | Dentistry Building |
| 130 | St. George St. | Robarts Library |
| 150 | College St. | Fitzgerald Building |
| 150 | St. George St. | 150 St. George St. |
| 155 | College St. | Health Sciences |
| 158 | St. George St. | 158 St. George St. |
| | | Centre for Cellular & Biomolecular Research |
| 160 | College St. | Rosebrugh Building |
| 162 | College St. | Haultian Building |
| 170 | College St. | Jackman Humanities |
| 170 | St. George St. | 172 St. George St. |
| 172 | St. George St. | 172 St. George St. |
| 174 | College St. | Mining Building |
| 184 | College St. | Wallberg Building |
| 214 | College St. | Koffler Student Services Cntr. |
| 215 | Huron St. | 215 Huron St. |
| 222 | College St. | Fields Institute |
| 223 | College St. | Gage Research Inst. |
| 230 | College St. | Architecture |
| 246 | Bloor St. W. | 246 Bloor St. W. |
| 252 | Bloor St. W. | OISE |
| 255 | Huron St. | McLennan Physics |
| 255 | McCaul St. | Exam Centre |
| 256 | McCaul St. | Medical Building |

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| 263 | McCaul St. | Board of Education |
| 275 | Bloor St. W. | Varsity Arena |
| 315 | Bloor St. W. | Admissions |
| 321 | Bloor St. W. | Woodworth Residence |
| 370 | Huron St. | Co op Daycare |
| 371 | Bloor St. W. | F.E.U.T. |
| 487 | Spadina Ave. | South Borden Building |
| 500 | University Ave. | University Office |
| 563 | Spadina Ave. | North Borden Building |
| 575 | Spadina Ave. | Koffler Multi Faith |
| 655 | Spadina Ave. | Faculty of Law |
| 703 | Spadina Ave. | Internal Audit |
| 713 | Spadina Ave. | 713 Spadina Ave. |

We would welcome your questions or comments regarding this system. Please feel free to contact University of Toronto Fire Prevention at the following email address, with subject line "fire alarm paging": steve.arnold@utoronto.ca