

Ontario 2026 Fire Code Change - Battery Load Testing



Overview

To provide an overview of the mandatory shift from simple voltage checks to measured load testing for fire alarm system batteries under the updated CAN/ULC 536:2024 standard.

Summary

Date of Effect	January 1, 2026
Key Information	The new requirement mandates true battery load testing instead of simple voltage checks for fire alarm system batteries. This verifies the battery's performance under actual demand to detect weaknesses that voltage checks miss.
Why It Matters	<p>True load testing is crucial because it identifies weaknesses that simple voltage checks miss, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Weak or aging batteries● Batteries that fail under stress● Issues with the battery, which is the secondary power source, compromising the fire alarm system's overall performance.
Impact	<p>The adoption of true battery load testing, as required by CAN/ULC 536:2024, will directly affect operational outcomes by requiring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Precise identification of weak or failing batteries using quantitative capacity measurement.● Improved maintenance through detection of underlying system issues affecting battery performance.● Clearer compliance documentation that includes verifiable load test results, proving the secondary power supply's fitness.

What To Expect

This is a major inspection change arriving in **2026** that will impact the **time, workflow, and cost** of annual testing. All Ontario service providers are mandated to meet this new **CAN/ULC 536:2024** standard, reflecting a provincial shift toward more thorough fire alarm inspections.