

Case Study: This Old House

i³ Series Smoke Detectors, CO Detectors



Selecting the correct fire alarm system for a home renovation project hinges on understanding your state and local codes and then installing the right products to meet those codes, according to Fire Alarm Specialist Greg Smizer, owner of Sprint Security Inc. in Waltham, Mass. He should know. For more than 30 years, Smizer has been installing fire alarm and security systems in renovated homes across New England.

Smizer has appeared on the Emmy Award-winning TV show "This Old House[®]," and offers his expertise on security, fire, and carbon monoxide (CO) detection and notification systems, which he provided for the show's 1897 Shingle-style home project in Newton, Mass. This project premiered nationally on PBS in October 2007.

Key to any renovation is to know and comply with the local codes. "Get to know your local Authority Having Jurisdiction. Often, it is your state fire marshal. Get to know the local and state fire alarm codes. Become familiar with the various licenses and permits that apply to your job: NPFA 72, local building codes, state building codes, Article 760 of the National Electrical Code, to name a few," advises Smizer. "For example, in Massachusetts, Nicole's Law stipulates that CO detectors must be installed in housing that uses fossil fuels or has enclosed parking. Ironically, no matter when a home was built, you can't sell it without meeting the current fire code."

Smizer also recommends reviewing the renovation floor plans, as drastic changes can alter the existing structure. For example, the recent "This Old House" renovation of the 4,200 square foot, Shingle-style home changed considerably as existing spaces were used for new purposes. A porch became part of the master bedroom and an original dining room became a family room.

Smizer chose nearly 30 System Sensor products to protect this home. He selected i³ Series photoelectric smoke detectors, RRS-MOD reversing relay/synchronization modules, 2W-MOD2 series loop test and maintenance modules, and A77-AB2 retrofit adapter brackets. He also installed System Sensor carbon monoxide detectors for this uniquely American renovation.

"In many cases," Smizer says, "building, electrical, and fire alarm permits are already in place. Normally, the fire marshal or an inspector reviews and approves the floor plans and locations of the fire detectors, alarms, and sensors." Permit regulations vary state by state. Once approved, the installation can begin.

"It's a good idea to mark any changes on the drawing and review the changes with the local fire official upon inspection," Smizer says.

Because the fire and CO detection and alarm devices were part of a complete security package for this renovation, Smizer used the standard FPL (power-limited fire alarm circuit cable) red fire cable throughout. Installation in the basement and the upper floors was easy because the beams were exposed. Smizer fished the wire behind the drywall in the main floors, being careful not to damage the original classic woodwork. Keypads were installed in convenient, yet discreet locations throughout the home and then linked to a processing center.

Photoelectric detectors match your needs

i³ Series Smoke Detectors deliver intelligence, installation ease, and instant inspection for optimal performance and reduced costs. A plug-in design and Stop-Drop

'N Lock mounting simplify installation. Smoothing algorithms and intelligent drift compensation minimize nuisance alarms. Accessories for remote sensitivity testing and remote maintenance signaling enable instant inspection. Choose the Standard, Auxiliary Form C Relay, Sounder, or Isolated Thermal i³ detector to suit your application.

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