Fire Alarm Retrofit: The 6-Step Framework Professionals Use Before They Touch a Wire

A live training webinar by **Anthony T. Richardson** | Secure It Securities | New York

FREE BIWEEKLY LIVE TRAINING

FIRE ALARM BUSINESS BLUEPRINT



Most retrofit failures happen before installation even starts.

Not because the tech didn't know how to wire. Not because they bought the wrong panel. Because they walked in **assuming**.

Why Retrofits Go Wrong

Wrong Assumption #1

The existing wiring is good and reusable.

Wrong Assumption #2

The old system was installed correctly.

Wrong Assumption #3

You can just swap the panel and be done.

These assumptions cost techs time, money, and failed inspections — every time.



What Tonight Is About

If you are retrofitting a fire alarm system — or about to bid your first retrofit job — this is for you. Over the next 60 minutes, you will learn the **exact 6-step framework** professionals use before they touch a single wire on an existing system.

> You do not need years of retrofit experience to follow this. You need a system. That is what tonight is about.

Your Instructor Tonight

Anthony T. Richardson

20+ years in the fire alarm industry. Active in the field — not just behind a camera.

Secure It Securities

New York-based fire alarm contractor. Does and bids retrofit work regularly.

Fire Alarm Business Blueprint

Has trained hundreds of technicians and business owners through the Blueprint program.



Who This Training Is For



Working Techs

Fire alarm technicians currently doing retrofit work in the field.



Contractors

Contractors bidding retrofit jobs and looking to win more profitably.



Business Owners

Fire alarm business owners who want a repeatable, professional process.

What You Will Walk Away With Tonight

1 **Retrofit ≠ New Construction**

Understand why retrofit is a fundamentally different type of work.

2 **Most Failures Happen Before Installation**

Know exactly where the risk lives — and how to eliminate it.

3 **The 6-Step Framework**

The complete professional process used before touching a single wire.

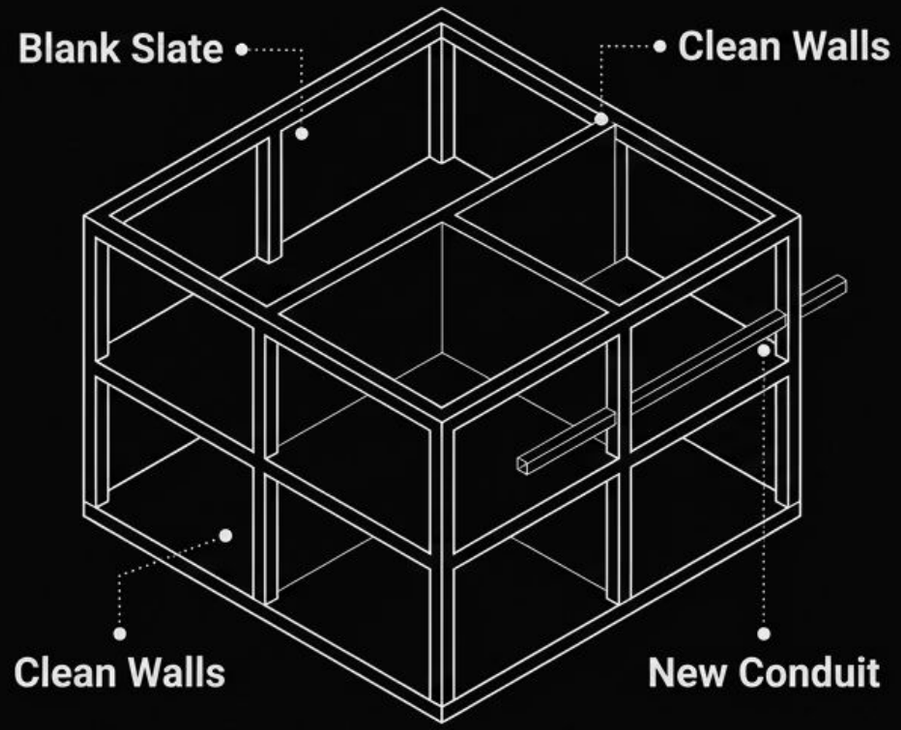


The Big Domino

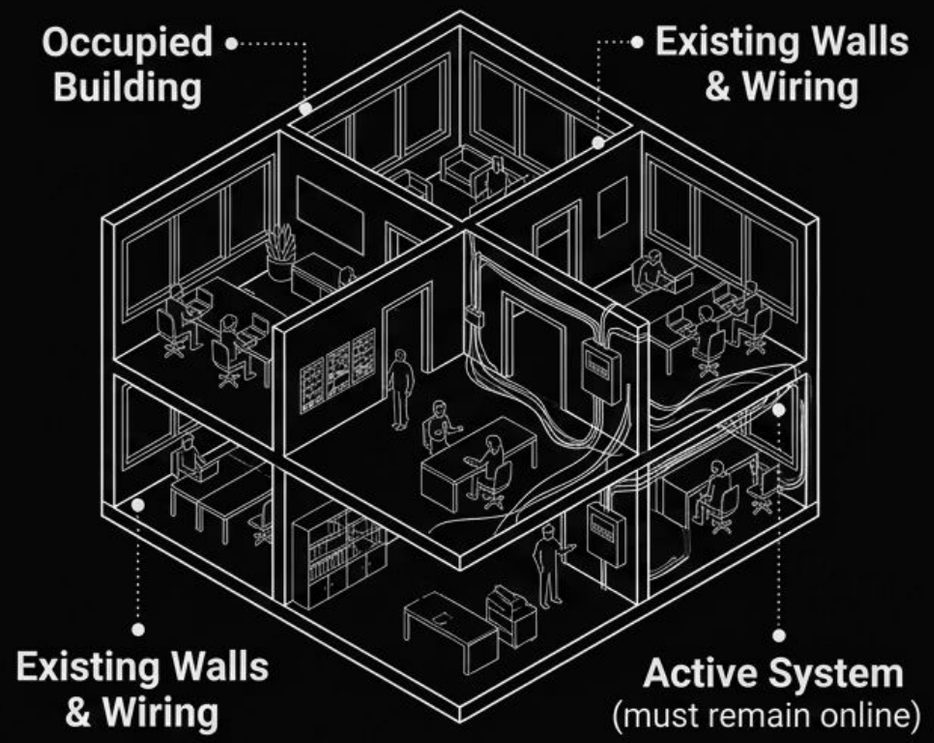
> "Retrofitting a fire alarm system is not installation work. It is planning. Engineering. Code knowledge. And risk management."

This single belief separates techs who do retrofits well from techs who get stuck on them.

New Construction vs. Retrofit



Empty structure with integrated new conduit, no existing obstacles, and no active fire alarm system.

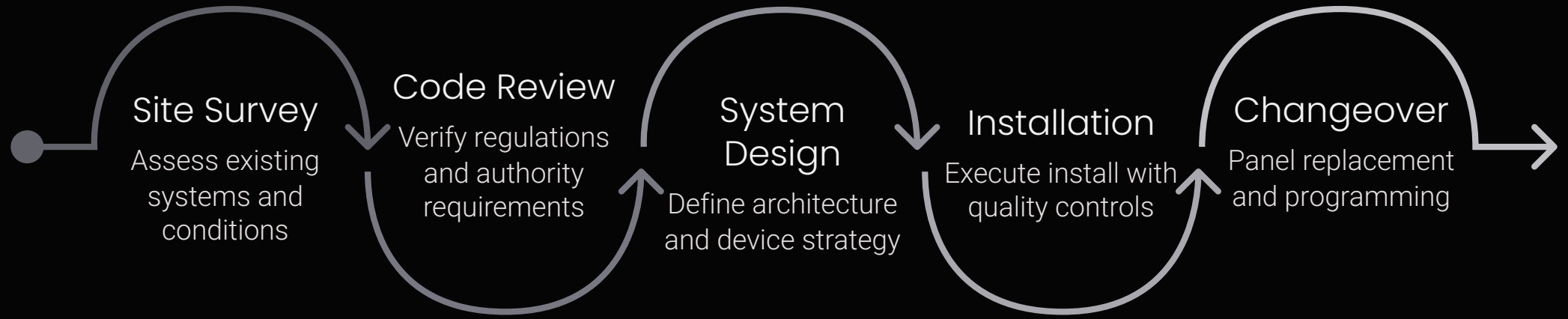


Occupied building with existing walls, wiring, and an active fire alarm system that must stay operational during work.

The occupied environment changes everything about how you plan, sequence, and execute the work.

The professionals who succeed at retrofit work follow a planning framework before they ever open a panel.

The 6-Step Retrofit Framework



Every professional retrofit follows this sequence. Skipping steps — especially the first three — is where most jobs fall apart.



Step 1: Site Survey & System Assessment

Before you touch a wire, you need to understand exactly what you are working with. This step is not optional — it is the foundation of everything that follows.

What the Site Survey Must Cover

Existing Panel

Make, model, and age of the current panel.

Devices

Types and quantities of all installed devices.

Wiring

Condition and wire gauge throughout the system.

Power Supplies

Power supply capacity and NAC loading calculations.

Monitoring

Current monitoring method and central station configuration.

The Danger of Assuming at Step 1

Do NOT Assume

- The wiring is reusable
- The old system was installed correctly
- You can just swap the panel

The Real Risk

Many retrofit failures happen because someone tried to swap a panel without checking field wiring or running proper calculations. Original installations often have code violations nobody caught for years. The moment you touch the system, those violations become **your problem**.

Slow down at Step 1. This step saves you later.



Step 2: Code Review & Authority Requirements

Any retrofit must comply with the **current adopted fire code** and **NFPA 72**. This step must happen before you commit to any design or equipment — not after.

What the Code Review Must Verify

01

Device Spacing

Confirm detector and device spacing meets current code requirements.

02

Strobe Candela Ratings

Verify strobe output meets current ADA and NFPA 72 standards.

03

Audibility Requirements

Confirm dB levels in all required spaces.

04

Pull Station Locations

Verify placement meets current code — not the original installation standard.

05

Local AHJ Amendments

Identify any local amendments your Authority Having Jurisdiction has adopted.

The Grandfathering Trap

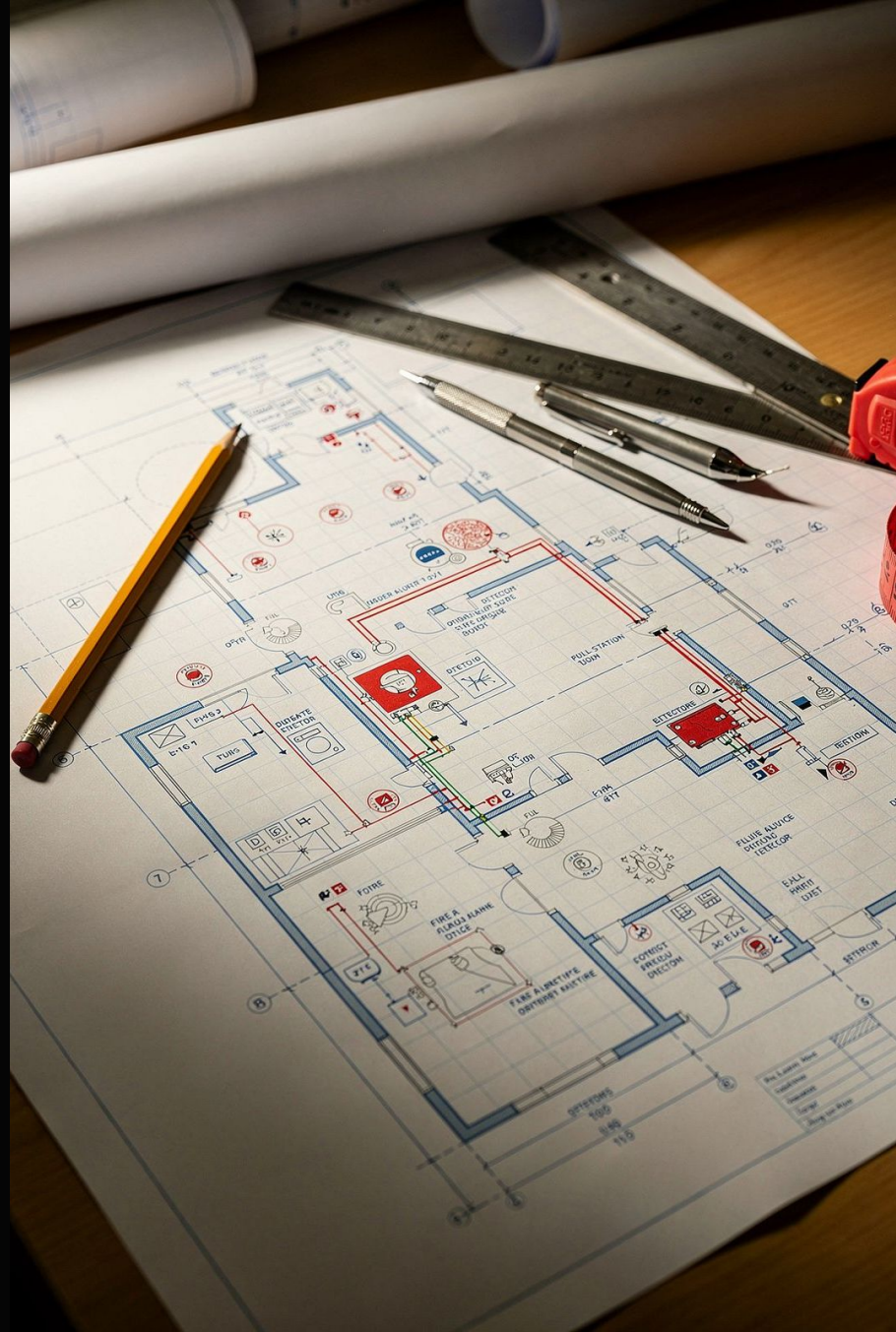
> "Once you modify a system, you may trigger full compliance with current code. What was grandfathered before may no longer be acceptable."

This is not a technicality. This is a **job-stopper** if you find it mid-installation. Always verify with the AHJ before you start.

⚠ A ten-minute phone call at Step 2 can save you a week of rework at Step 6.

Step 3: System Design & Device Strategy

Retrofit work requires smart design choices. You are not designing for an empty building — you are designing **around what already exists**. That constraint changes every decision you make.



Retrofit Design Principles



Reuse Conduit

Use existing conduit runs wherever possible to minimize disruption.



Minimize Damage

Protect walls and ceilings — you are in an occupied building.



Device Compatibility

Select devices compatible with existing wiring to reduce rework.



Clean Changeover

Choose a panel that supports a clean, methodical cutover process.

Addressable vs. Conventional on Retrofits

Why Addressable Is Often Right

- Better diagnostics in existing buildings
- Easier troubleshooting post-installation
- Room for future expansion

The Critical Warning

A **poorly designed** addressable system on a retrofit is harder to troubleshoot than the conventional system you replaced. Design first. Then commit to the equipment.

Steps 1–3: Key Takeaways

Step 1: Site Survey

Know exactly what you are walking into before planning anything.

Step 2: Code Review

Verify AHJ requirements BEFORE you start — not mid-job.

Step 3: System Design

Design around what exists, not around what is ideal.

Which of these first three steps do most techs skip? The answer is usually all three.

The Belief That Holds Techs Back

False Belief

"Retrofit work is only for experienced contractors. I am not there yet."

True Belief

"The framework is learnable. **Structure and preparation create the experience.** The techs who succeed are the ones who slow down at the right moments."

What the Professional Skill Actually Looks Like

Slow Down at the Right Moments

Not hesitation — deliberate, methodical assessment before committing.

Ask the AHJ Before Assuming

A phone call before the job beats a rework order after it.

Document Before You Disconnect

Every circuit, every label, every configuration — before you touch it.

Test Before You Call It Done

Verification is not optional. It is the job.



The Framework in Action

"He went through the framework, applied it on his first retrofit estimate, and landed the contract. The framework gave him the confidence to walk in and ask the right questions — and that made him look more professional than the two other techs who bid the same job."

Structure and preparation create the experience.



Step 4: The Installation Phase

This is where experience matters most — but **preparation matters more**. The work you did in Steps 1–3 determines whether Step 4 goes smoothly or falls apart.

Installation Phase: Non-Negotiables

Coordinate With Management

Schedule work during off-hours when possible. Protect occupied spaces at all times.

Label Before You Disconnect

Every circuit must be labeled before anything is disconnected. No exceptions.

Never Leave Unprotected

If the system must go offline, you need an approved fire watch and **written authorization** — not a handshake.

Professionalism Is Not Optional

> "You are in someone's occupied building. The occupants trust that you know what you are doing. Your documentation and your process are what prove that."

Professionalism on a retrofit is not about appearance. It is about protecting the people inside the building while the work is being done.

Step 5: Panel Changeover & Programming

The cutover is the most technically demanding moment of the retrofit. Work methodically. One mistake here creates hours of troubleshooting at Step 6.



Cutover: The Right Sequence

01

Transfer One Circuit at a Time

Never transfer multiple circuits simultaneously. Verify supervision at each transfer before moving to the next.

02

Program Addresses Accurately

Every address must be correct. Label everything clearly in the panel and in your documentation.

03

Match Sequence of Operations

Programming must match: notification zones, elevator recall, HVAC shutdown, and monitoring signals.

The Cost of Rushing Step 5

One Programming Error =

A **failed inspection**. Not a near-miss. A failed inspection that sends you back to the beginning.

The Professional Principle

Slow is smooth. Smooth is fast. Do it right at Step 5 and Step 6 becomes straightforward. Rush Step 5 and you will spend twice as long at Step 6 troubleshooting.



Step 6: Testing, Inspection & Documentation

Before inspection, **every device must be tested**. This is not a formality — it is the final proof that the retrofit was done correctly. Show up prepared or expect to fail.

Pre-Inspection Testing Checklist

Audibility

Verify dB levels meet code in all required spaces.

Strobe Sync

Confirm strobe synchronization across all notification zones.

Trouble & Supervisory

Test all trouble and supervisory signals at the panel.

Central Station

Confirm monitoring signals are received correctly by the central station.

The Documentation Package



As-Built Drawings

Accurate drawings reflecting the system as actually installed.



Battery Calculations

Documented standby and alarm load calculations.



Voltage Drop Calcs

Calculations proving adequate power to all devices.



Device Address List

Complete list of all device addresses and locations.



Your documentation is your professionalism made visible.

What Inspectors Expect

> "The inspector does not want to wait while you find paperwork. The inspector does not want to discover things you should have caught. Show up to inspection with a complete package."

Steps 4–6: Key Takeaways

→ Step 4: Installation

Label before you disconnect. Never leave a building unprotected. Written authorization for any system downtime.

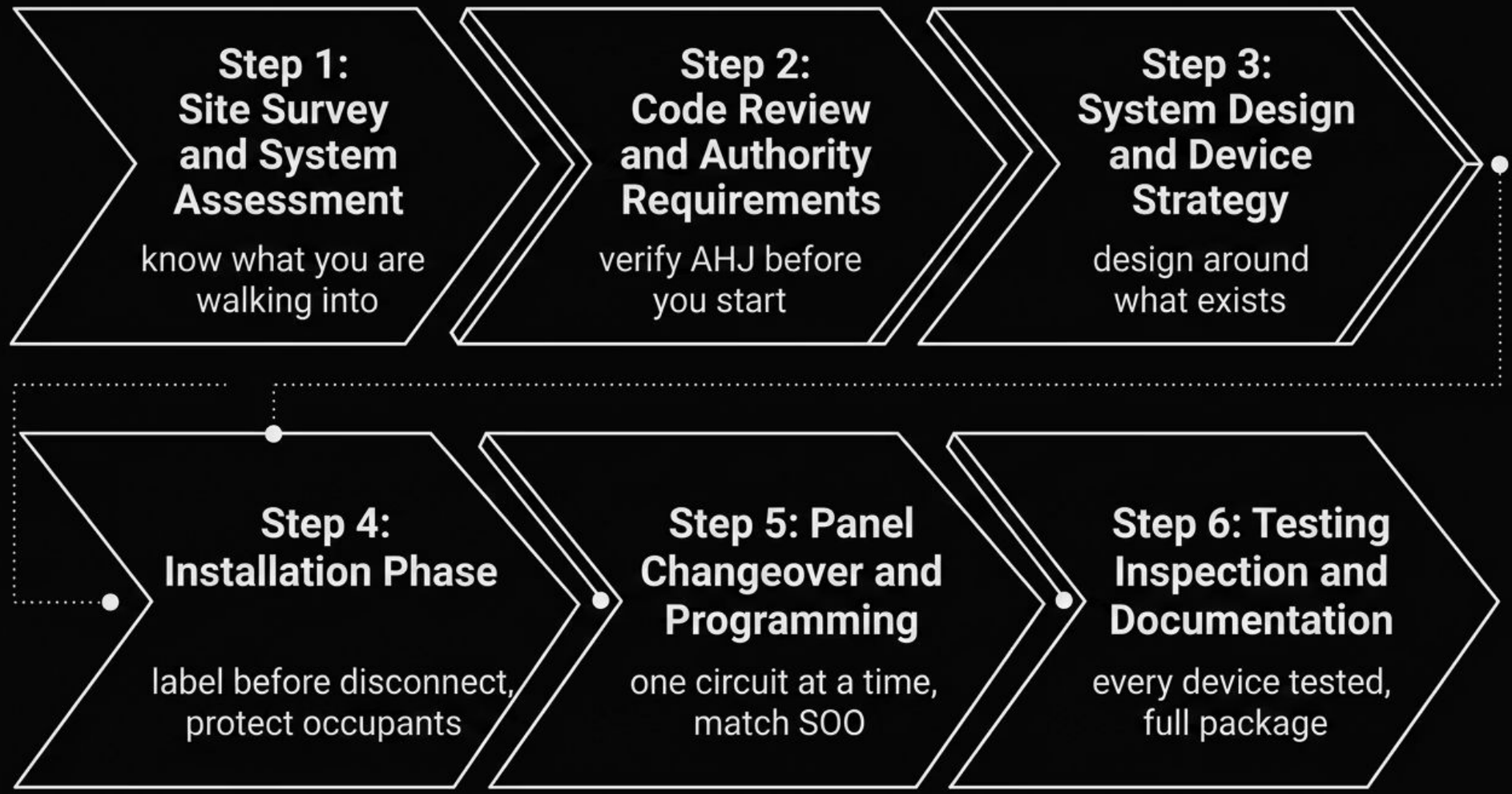
→ Step 5: Panel Changeover

One circuit at a time. Programming must match the full sequence of operations.

→ Step 6: Testing + Docs

Every device tested. Full documentation package before inspection.

The Complete 6-Step Framework



Retrofit = Planning + Engineering + Code Knowledge + Risk Management. Follow the sequence and the job becomes manageable.

You now have the framework. Here is how to go deeper.

The Retrofit Framework Is One Piece of a Bigger System

Tonight's framework covers the technical side of retrofit work. But if you are serious about turning your fire alarm skills into a business that pays you what you are worth — there is a complete system built for exactly that.



Introducing: Fire Alarm Business Blueprint

FREE Biweekly Live Training

Every two weeks. Live. Real content. Not a replay you watch alone.

Next Session

Oct 7, 2026. Seats fill up fast register tonight while there is still space.

Register Free

freeblueprinttraining.secureitsecurities.io/free-fabb-webinar

What the Live Training Is — and Is Not

What It IS

- Live structured 60–90 minute sessions
- Real content on a specific Blueprint topic
- Live Q&A with Anthony Richardson
- Replay access for registered attendees

What It Is NOT

- A pitch-fest or filler content
- A pre-recorded course
- A paid program (it is completely free)
- The same content every session

Live Training: Module Overview

01

Business Formation

LLC, EIN, business banking — the legal foundation every contractor needs before doing a dollar of paid work.

02

Licensing Roadmap

NYS 81-hour course, NICET path, local AHJ requirements — the exact sequence to get licensed.

03

Insurance & Bonding

Coverage types, how to get bonded as a new company, bid/performance/payment bonds explained.

04

Estimating & Bidding

Site walkthrough, material takeoff, labor loading, profit margin — how to price a job correctly.

Live Training: Advanced Modules



Market Monster + Nexos

Cold outreach, Google optimization, paid ads, CRM automation, email/SMS follow-up, and reputation management.



Operations

Subcontractors, scheduling, recurring service contracts, documentation, and client communication.



Financial Systems

Job costing, owner pay, tax structure, growth capital — how to run the money correctly.

What You Get in Every Session



Live Q&A

Direct answers from Anthony Richardson — bring real questions from real jobs and real situations.



Replay Access

Every session recorded and sent to registered attendees within 24 hours.



Real Peer Network

Real questions from real techs and contractors at the same stage you are.

The Full Blueprint Value

What You Get	Value
Business Formation (LLC, EIN, banking)	Priceless
Licensing Roadmap (NYS, NICET, local)	Priceless
Insurance & Bonding Strategy	Priceless
Estimating & Bidding System	Priceless
Market Monster Lead Generation	Priceless
Nexos Marketing OS (GoHighLevel CRM)	Priceless
Live Q&A Every Session	Priceless
Retrofit Framework (like tonight)	Priceless

Who the Live Training Is Built For



Early-Stage Techs

Never bid a retrofit or started a company yet. The Blueprint gives you the framework to walk in confidently.



Existing Contractors

Already have a company but relying on word of mouth. Market Monster and Nexos build a consistent lead pipeline.



Business Owners

Want to run the business without being on every job. Operations and financial systems modules are built for you.

Q&A: Is the Live Training Really Free?

> "Yes. No credit card. No trial period. You register, you show up, you get real content. It is free because I want to show you the system before you ever spend a dollar."

If the live sessions are valuable to you — and they will be — the Blueprint goes deeper. But the live training itself costs nothing.

Q&A: What Happens at the Live Training?

It is a structured 60-to-90-minute session covering a specific part of the Fire Alarm Business Blueprint system. Anthony teaches real content, takes live questions, and shows you exactly how to apply what you learn to your business or career.

Every session is different. Registration gets you access to the replay if you cannot make it live.

Q&A: I Already Have a Company — Is This for Me?

Short Answer

Yes. The live training covers both early-stage business building and growth systems for existing contractors.

Specifically for You

The **Market Monster** and **Nexos** sessions are built for contractors who already have a company and want a consistent lead pipeline instead of relying on word of mouth.

Q&A: What Is the Fire Alarm Business Blueprint?

The Blueprint is the full business system — from forming your LLC through getting licensed, bonded, insured, and marketing your company. The live biweekly training delivers the content in sessions. The full Blueprint program goes deeper with all the templates, tools, and done-with-you support.

Tonight's registration gets your foot in the door.

Q&A: I Work Long Hours — Can I Watch the Replay?

> "Yes. Every session is recorded. Registrants get access to the replay. You can watch it whenever you have time. But the live version is where the Q&A happens — and that is where most of the real value comes from."

Q&A: Retrofit Is Not My Focus — Is There Still Value?

Absolutely. The retrofit framework is one module. The live training covers **licensing, bidding, marketing, bonding, Nexos, and business operations**. Whatever stage you are at and whatever your focus is — there is a session that applies directly to where you are right now.



Seats Are Limited — Register Tonight

These sessions fill up. When registration hits capacity, it closes. The next session is **October 7, 2026**. Register tonight while you are thinking about it. Do not wait until next week and find out the session is full.

> ⚠ Seats fill up fast. Register tonight while there is still space.

The Question to Ask Yourself

> "What does the next retrofit job look like if you walk in with a clear 6-step process — and a business behind you that is licensed, bonded, insured, and generating leads automatically? That is what the Blueprint builds."

Register for the Next Free Live Session

Event

Fire Alarm Business Blueprint — FREE Biweekly Live Training

Next Session

Oct 7, 2026 — register tonight while seats are available

Hosted By

Anthony T. Richardson | The Fire Alarm Expert | SIS Corp

Register Free — Fire Alarm Business Blueprint

What the Blueprint Covers — Full Module List



Every two weeks. Live. Free. Real content. Licensing | Insurance | Bonding | Marketing | Nexos | Business Systems.



Stay Safe. Wire It Clean.

You now have the 6-step retrofit framework. Use it on your next job. And register for the next live session to see how it fits into the complete system for building a profitable fire alarm business.

Register Free — Next Session: Oct 7, 2026

Anthony T. Richardson | The Fire Alarm Expert | Secure It Securities