Common Stages Terms and Language

Alarm monitoring systems use a lot of specialized language. If you're new to Stages — or new to central station monitoring in general — some of these terms may be unfamiliar at first.

This article is a plain-language glossary of common terms you'll see throughout Stages and the monitoring process. You don't need to memorize these definitions, but understanding them will make it much easier to follow other articles, training, and conversations.

Core Monitoring Concepts

Alarm
An event that requires action. An alarm is created when a signal is interpreted by the system and determined to need a response.

Signal
A piece of data sent from a device in the field (for example, a door opening, motion detected, or system test). Not all signals become alarms.

Central Station
A professional monitoring center is responsible for receiving signals, responding to alarms, and coordinating appropriate action.

Operator
A person who responds to alarms in the monitoring system by following defined procedures.

Supervisor
A user role responsible for oversight, configuration, and performance management within the monitoring operation.

Stages System Concepts

Stages
A rules-driven alarm monitoring platform designed to manage high volumes of alarms with consistency, accountability, and control.

Lifecycle
The complete journey an alarm takes — from signal receipt, through dispatch and response, to final resolution and historical record.

Rules-Driven
A system design where behavior is defined in advance using logic and configuration, rather than relying on operator judgment in the moment.

Signal Processing and Interpretation

Signal Processing
The stage where incoming signals are evaluated, classified, and interpreted before reaching an operator.

Event Code
A classification applied to a signal that determines what type of event it represents and how it should be handled.

Priority
A value that determines how urgent an alarm is and how quickly it should be handled compared to others.

Suppressed Signal
A signal that is intentionally prevented from generating an alarm based on configuration or device state.

Dispatch and Response

Dispatch
The process of presenting alarms to operators for response.

Dispatch Queue
An organized list of alarms waiting to be handled, typically grouped by priority, alarm type, or operational rules.

Action Plan
A structured set of instructions that guides operators through how to respond to an alarm, step by step.

Outcome
The result of an operator action within an action plan (for example: contact made, no answer, verified alarm).

Site and Device Structure

Site
A monitored location, such as a building, residence, or facility.

Site Group
A collection of sites that share common rules, configuration, or behavior.

Device
A physical piece of equipment at a site that generates signals (such as a sensor or panel).

Xmit (Transmitter Number)
A unique identifier used to associate incoming signals with the correct site and device.

Alarm Resolution and Follow-Up

Clear
The completion of an alarm response with no further action required.

Escalation
Additional action is taken when an alarm cannot be resolved through the initial steps.

Follow-Up
A tracked task is created when an alarm requires action at a later time.

Deferred Action

An intentional delay in completing an action, managed through follow-ups rather than memory or notes.

System State and Maintenance

Out of Service (OOS)
A device state that controls whether signals should generate alarms, typically used during maintenance or testing.

OOS Category
A predefined rule set that determines how signals behave while a device is out of service.

In Service
A device state where signals are processed normally.

History, Reporting, and Oversight

Alarm History
A detailed, permanent record of alarms, including actions taken and outcomes.

Alarm Statistics
Aggregated performance data is used to measure response times, workload, and trends.

Audit Trail
A traceable record showing what happened, when it happened, and who performed each action.

Operator Guidance and Documentation

Rich Text
Formatted text is used to display instructions, notes, or important information clearly to operators.

Instructions
Written guidance is presented during alarm handling to ensure a consistent response.

Why This Language Matters

Stages relies on shared understanding. When everyone uses the same language — operators, supervisors, project teams, and customers — it becomes easier to:

- Communicate clearly
- Troubleshoot issues faster
- Onboard new team members
- Maintain consistent operations

This glossary exists to support that shared understanding.

A Living Resource

This list is not exhaustive. As you continue working with Stages, you may encounter new terms or concepts.

Additional definitions will be added over time as the platform evolves and new features are introduced.

Where to Go Next

If you're just getting started, you may also find these articles helpful:

- What Is Stages and Why It's Different from Traditional Monitoring Platforms
- A Day in the Life of a Central Station Using Stages
- Understanding the Alarm Lifecycle in Stages

Together, these articles provide a strong foundation for learning how Stages works.