

## Fire Watch Procedure

### Overview

A Fire Watch is a temporary measure intended to ensure continuous and systematic surveillance of a building or portion of the building by one or more qualified individuals for the purpose of identifying and controlling fire hazards, detecting early signs of fire, raising an alarm in the event of a fire, and notifying the fire department in the event of a fire.

A Fire Watch is required when:

- There is an impairment to the fire alarm system, sprinkler system, or fire suppression system.
- An Interim Life Safety Measures (ILSM) Assessment requires a Fire Watch.

### Standard Reference

**NFPA 101 2012 Section 3.3.104 Fire Watch.** The assignment of a person or persons to an area for the express purpose of notifying the fire department, the building occupants, or both of an emergency; preventing a fire from occurring; extinguishing small fires; or protecting the public from fire or life safety dangers.

**NFPA 101 2012 Section 9.6.1.6\*.** Where a required fire alarm system is out of service for more than 4 hours in a 24-hour period, the authority having jurisdiction shall be notified, and the building shall be evacuated or an approved fire watch shall be provided for all parties left unprotected by the shutdown until the fire alarm system has been returned to service.

**NFPA 101 2012 Section A.9.6.1.6.** A fire watch should at least involve some special action beyond normal staffing, such as assigning an additional security guard(s) to walk the areas affected. These individuals should be specially trained in fire prevention and in occupant and fire department notification techniques, and they should understand the particular fire safety situation for public education purposes.

The term out of service in 9.6.1.6 is indented to imply that a significant portion of the fire alarm system is not in operation, such as an entire initiating device, signaling line, or notification appliance circuit. It

is not the intent of the Code to require notification of the authority having jurisdiction, or evacuation of the portion of the building affected, for a single non-operating device or appliance.

- **NFPA 101-2012 Section 9.7.6.** Sprinkler system impairment procedures must comply with NFPA 25-2011.
- **NFPA 25 2011 A.15.5.2(4)(b)** A fire watch should consist of trained personnel who continuously patrol the affected area. Ready access to fire extinguishers and the ability to promptly notify the fire department are important items to consider. During the patrol of the area, the person should not only be looking for fire, but making sure that the other fire protection features of the building such as egress routes and alarm systems are available and functioning properly.

## Fire Watch Personnel

The individual conducting the periodic inspections of the impairment area(s) is called the Fire Watch or Fire Guard. The Fire Watch personnel shall continually make rounds through all affected areas and buildings using the facility designated checklist/tour document. Frequency of rounds depends on the facilities policy. If circumstances demand, more frequent surveillance shall be conducted.

The Fire Watch Shall:

- Continually patrol the area, structure or facility and document the patrol.
- Be trained in the use of a fire extinguisher and have one accessible at all times.
- Be capable of communicating with building occupants and the fire department to notify them about fires or other emergencies.
- Maintain a record of the Fire Watch for inspection by the Authority Having Jurisdiction.

## Fire Watch Responsibilities

- Searching diligently for fires.
- Immediately addressing any hazards that are discovered.
- Controlling fire ignition sources.

- Making sure there's adequate means of egress and removing any obstructions.
- Making sure other alarm systems are functioning properly.
- Standing ready to contact the local fire department.
- Standing ready to extinguish any fires using a portable fire extinguisher or hose.
- Alerting occupants to hazardous conditions that require evacuation.
- Documenting patrols at the designated frequency.

## Fire Watch Check List (What to check for)

- Potential fire ignition sources (examples: frayed electrical wires, improperly stored flammables, and defective electronic components).
- Trash, garbage and excess combustible materials.
- All exits, stairways and hallways (must be clear of any obstructions that would impede emergency movement).
- All self-closing doors (examine to assure that they are not blocked and wedged and may close freely in a fire emergency).
- Sprinkler systems (if active, must be inspected for possible sprinkler head obstruction, leakage, closed valves, or decreased pressure. Must be reported immediately).
- Fire extinguishers (must be in their proper locations, undamaged, unobstructed, visible, properly pressurized and sealing bands that secure the pin shall be intact).
- Outside doors are closed and secured, and windows, fire doors and fire shutters are closed.
- All waste, rags, paint residue, rubbish, and similar combustible items are removed from the building.
- All remaining operable fire protection equipment is in place and not obstructed.
- Ensure that all aisles are clear.
- All unsecured offices and conference rooms are checked for unapproved smoking material that may have been carelessly discarded.
- All unnecessary heat-producing devices are turned off in the impairment area.
- Ensure that flammable and combustible materials are properly stored in approved containers.

- Ensure that sprinkler valves are in the open position. (NOTE: If sprinkler control valves are electronically supervised by the Automatic Fire Alarm System and are not impaired by this scope of work, then visual examination is not required.)

## Documentation of Fire Watch

The Fire Watch Personnel shall document all inspections on the facility checklist/tour document. The checklist/tour document must be made available to any Authority Having Jurisdiction upon request.

## Authority Having Jurisdiction

Contact your local Authority Having Jurisdiction to confirm what procedures you must follow to comply with.