

OFFICE OF THE COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION BUREAU
North Shore Fire Department

EFFECTIVE DATE: _____

TO:

All Persons or Institutions directed to conduct a “Fire Watch”

SUBJECT:

Fire Watch Requirements and Documentation

This memorandum was created to help provide consistent and helpful information to persons who may need to conduct a fire watch in order to meet the fire and life safety requirements of the State and locally adopted Fire Codes (*Referenced edition, NFPA 1, 2012*).

Definition:

3.3.126 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.

Intent:

A.13.3.3.6.5.2(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.

A.13.7.1.4.4 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. Such 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. (*Also see NFPA 601, standard for Security Services in Fire Loss Prevention.*)

Authority for ordering a “Fire Watch”:

1.7.16.1 The AHJ shall have the authority to require standby fire personnel or an approved fire watch when potentially hazardous conditions or a reduction in a life safety feature exist due to the type of performance, display, exhibit, occupancy, contest or activity, an impairment to a fire protection feature or the number of persons present. (*See page 4 for additional references*)

Minimum Fire Watch Components:

1. Regular patrols by qualified personnel (*see qualifications requirements on Page 2*)
2. Notification of the North Shore Fire Department (*see page 5 for impairment reporting procedures*)
3. Clearly identified, established and verified means of communication to report an emergency and initiate evacuation of the building (if occupied).
4. Documentation of the fire watch detail; to include, Dates, times, personnel names and signatures and other information as detailed below.

Fire Watch Personnel Qualifications:

In order to be designated to be qualified to be a fire watch, fire watch personnel should be trained annually in the following:

1. Fire extinguishers procedures
2. Procedures for reporting an emergency
3. Evacuation procedures
4. Knowledge of the building and the various rooms contained within the building
5. Fire awareness and recognition of obvious hazards to life and property
6. Use/ business specific safety policies and procedures

Duties of Personnel on Fire Watch:

Personnel providing a fire watch shall perform the following duties:

- Conduct periodic patrols of the entire facility
- Identify any fire, life safety or property hazards and report them by contact 9-1-1 and reporting the type of emergency and exact location
- If the building is occupied, notify all occupants to evacuate. If the sirens or public address systems are operational, use them to assist with the evacuation of the building.
- Determine at least one means of direct communication with the fire department.
- Maintain a log of fire watch activities.
- Have a good working knowledge of the fire protection equipment available and be trained in how to use them, including the fire extinguishers.
- Personnel performing a fire watch cannot have any other duties than the fire watch.
 - Note: personnel performing the fire watch will not perform any firefighting duties beyond the scope of the ordinary citizen.

Frequency of Fire Watch Patrol:

Fire watch personnel shall patrol the entire facility every 15 minutes when:

- The facility has people sleeping in it
- The facility is an institutional occupancy
- The facility is an assembly occupancy

All other facilities shall have fire watch personnel patrol the facility every 30 minutes. This shall be further clarified that each physical area of the facility shall be physically inspected on 30 minute intervals. Therefore, if the facility is too large to be patrolled by one person within a 30 minute time frame, additional personnel will be required.

Record Keeping:

Detailed records of any fire watch condition must be generated and kept. For your convenience the NSFD has provided you with a form to help you with these records. Please see the attached addendum.

- A copy of this log form must be submitted to the NSFD for review each day for each 24-hour period the fire watch is in effect. Electronic submittal is preferred at fireprev@nsfire.org.
- The NSFD fire watch log form shall be maintained at the facility for at least one year. Attached to the primary component of the life safety system that was the reason for the fire watch to be conducted is preferred (i.e. riser, fire alarm panel).

Secondary Record Keeping Options:

If you choose to generate your own log/ record keeping document the following information must be included:

- The address of the facility
- The person responsible to putting the fire watch in place (AHJ or contractor)
- Date and times that the fire watch went into effect and was cancelled
- Name and signature of the person conducting the fire watch
- Dates and times (log in and out times) of each person doing fire watch duty
- The means of communication arranged for the fire watch person to contact the fire department.
- A note field for entry/recording any unusual occurrences or notable items.
- Records of any pertinent information directed to be collected by the person enacting the fire watch condition.

Additional Fire Watch Authority References (Specific)

Sprinkler System/ Suppression System Impairments: (Emergency and Planned)

13.3.3.6.2.1 The property owner or designated representative shall assign an impairment coordinator to comply with the requirements of 13.3.3.6

13.3.3.6.5.2 Before authorization is given, the impairment coordinator shall be responsible for verifying that the following procedures have been implemented.

- 4) Where a required fire protection system is out of service for more than 10 hours in a 24-hour period, the impairment coordinator shall arrange for one of the following:
 - a. Evacuation of the building or portion of the building affected by the system out of service.
 - b. An approved fire watch
 - c. Establishment of a temporary water supply
 - d. Establishment and implementation of an approved program to eliminate potential ignition sources and limit the amount of fuel available to the fire.
- 5) The fire department has been notified.
- 6) The insurance carrier, the alarm company, property owner or designated representative, and other AHJ's have been notified.
- 8) A tag impairment system has been implemented.

Fire Alarm System Impairments:

13.7.1.4.4 Where a required fire alarm system is out of service for more than 4 hours in a 24-hour period, the AHJ 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.

General Construction and Demolition:

16.5.4 Where in the opinion of the AHJ the demolition site is of a hazardous nature, qualified personnel shall serve as an on-site fire watch.

Other Hazardous conditions in which and AHJ may order a Fire Watch:

Assembly Occupancies:

20.1.5.7 Fire details, if deemed necessary in any assembly occupancy shall be determined by the AHJ.

20.1.5.6 Crowd Managers: Crowd Managers shall be provided for every 250 persons etc.

Hot Work:

Hot work shall be done only under permit from the NSFD.

Hot work in existing structures shall be done only under fire watch conditions. All hot work fire watches shall be done in accordance with NFPA 1; Chapter 41.

Storage Facilities:

34.5.4.3 A fire watch shall be maintained when the sprinkler system is not in service.

Impairment Notification Procedures:

The building owner, contractor doing the work and/or the impairment coordinator shall notify the NSFD of any impairment or failure of a life safety system that will cause the system to be out of service for more than four hours. This notification shall be in the following form(s):

- 1) An email shall be sent to fireprev@nsfire.org, and
- 2) A follow up phone call shall be made to 357-0113 ext. 1512

The email must include the following information:

- Name, address and location/extent of the impairment
- Name and cell phone number of the owner, contractor and impairment coordinator
- Expected duration of the impairment, OOS
- A scope of work letter or permit submittal for associated work (Please visit www.nsfire.org for permit applications.)

Owner Responsibilities:

- Insure that qualified personnel are providing the fire watch
- Notify the monitoring company that the facility is under a fire watch
- Notify the fire department that the system is not working and then again when the system is operational. Schedule any testing or inspections that may be necessary to verify this by calling 414-357-0113 ext. 1512.
 - It is the owner's responsibility to contact the NSFD and provide adequate documentation to verify the affected system is operational or to schedule an inspection to verify the function of the system in question.
 - Note: Only the Fire Department can cancel or otherwise remove a fire watch that has been put in place.
- Contract with a certified/licensed company to repair the system that is not operational
- Provide documentation of the impairment and certification from the contractor that impairment has been corrected and tested to be in working order. This documentation shall be kept as part of the building record and a copy shall be posted at the control panel/riser.