FIRE WATCH PROCEDURES

The purpose of a fire watch is to provide temporary surveillance in a building or premises for the purposes of identifying and controlling fire hazards, detecting early signs of unwanted fire, initiating alarms or evacuation procedures, and notifying the fire department.

Purpose

Fire watch service is a temporary measure taken when an automatic fire protection system is impaired or becomes out of-service or other hazardous conditions, when deemed necessary by the Fire Department or Fire Inspector. This service is intended to ensure continuous and systematic surveillance of a building or its protected portion(s) by one or more qualified individuals who are responsible for identifying and controlling fire hazards, detecting early signs of unwanted fire, raising an alarm of fire and notifying the fire department.

The fire watch's primary function is to detect, notify, and evacuate the protected area or building. Firefighting activities are **NOT** the purpose of the watch and should be limited to incipient-level firefighting necessary to accomplish their primary function. Additionally, the fire watch is to remain on the property, for the purposes of assisting the fire department with information and establishing contact with the owner/manager.

Scope

The continued use and occupancy of any structure or business is dependent on all installed fire protection systems being maintained in an operational mode. Failure of any system to operate places the occupancy in jeopardy. Protection of persons and property against the hazards of fire is a management responsibility. The requirements of this procedure are intended to aid the management in the selection, requirements, duties and training of individuals used to perform a fire watch when systems are down and a fire watch is required to protect personnel and property from fire.

Requirements

If a fire protection system fails, or there are an excessive number of accidental activations or nuisance alarms, a building owner (or their representative) may be required by the Fire Department or Fire Inspector to provide a fire watch until the system is repaired. Personnel to conduct the fire watch are determined by the building owner.

Note: A professional security company is not required.

A fire watch is also required whenever fire protection systems are in a trouble or a supervisory mode for more than (8) eight hours.

A nuisance alarm is defined as "any alarm caused by mechanical failure, malfunction, improper installation, or lack of proper maintenance, or any alarm activated by a cause that cannot be determined."

The management of the business or property shall supervise the fire watch service or designate a responsible person to provide supervision of fire watch. A fire watch is a 24-hour requirement, the same as the fire alarm or sprinkler system provided for the structure. If the supervisor is absent from the site a clear line of responsibility must be given to the fire watch in writing. Where utilized, fire watches shall be provided with at least one approved means for notification of the fire department and their only duty shall be to perform constant patrols of the protected premises and keep watch for fires.

Frequency of Inspections

Fire watch personnel should patrol the entire facility every 15 minutes in the following situations:
a) The facility has people sleeping.
b) The facility is an institutional occupancy.
c) The facility is an occupied assembly or educational occupancy
Occupied facilities that do not meet the requirements for a 15-minute patrol frequency should have a fire watch patrol every 30 minutes.

Procedure

Fire watch personnel must be familiar with the property to be protected or escorted thru the property to be made familiar with the site or structure, so when reporting a fire they may give proper directions and information to the 911 Center. They shall become familiar with manufacturing switches, if applicable, all electrical shut off devices and main power cut-offs as well gas, oil and process water and any other areas that may be either hazardous to responding fire service personnel or add fuel to any fire situation. Fire watches must know the location of any fire extinguisher, sprinkler system controls, hose connections and all fire protection equipment in the structure or site.

Fire watch personnel shall be made familiar by management of all hazardous material locations and dangerous processes within the structure and site along with the storage areas for products that add fuel to combustion.

Pre-Emergency Plans

Fire watch personnel shall be made familiar with any pre-emergency plan and emergency plans that exist for the structure. Fire watch personnel must know their responsibility under any emergency plan in effect.

Fire Alarm by Fire Watch

If fire watch personnel discover a fire, their first response is to notify the fire department by calling the 911 Center. They will be required to report the exact location of the fire and the extent of fire involvement. **ONLY AFTER** reporting the fire to the fire department may they attempt to use fire extinguishing equipment in the structure to extinguish the fire.

General

A fire watch shall make rounds of the structure and grounds at intervals determined by the type of occupancy and the hazards and special conditions associated with this building or structure. A record of the rounds, times, and conditions shall be kept by the fire watch personnel and maintained by the management for future review by the Fire Inspector.

The first round of a fire watch should begin as soon as possible. During the rounds, the fire watch should make thorough inspection of the building or spaces assigned to him/her noting at a minimum the following:

1. Portable fire extinguishers are in place, unobstructed and in proper operating condition;
2. Corridors and exits are free and clear of storage and all other obstructions;
3. Exit and stairwell doors are clear and fully operational;
4. EXIT signs are visible and properly illuminated;
5. Fire doors, smoke barrier doors and hazardous area doors are kept closed and latched (i.e. not tied, wedged or blocked open in any fashion);
6. Oxygen cylinders/containers not in use are properly stored;
7. Electrical hazards are promptly reported and remedied;
8. No smoking or work involving cutting or welding or the use of flammable/combustible liquids is taking place (unless such work has been preauthorized and is taking place in an area that is properly fire separated from the remainder of the facility); and
9. Trash and other unnecessary accumulations of combustibles are promptly removed from the building.

Fire watch personnel shall report promptly any condition that needs immediate attention; the management should correct reports of this nature immediately. Conditions that appear to cause fire hazards shall be noted on the fire watch hourly rounds report.

Management should provide the fire watch with written instructions on rounds, notification of personnel, and names and ways to contact supervisory personnel.

Cancellation of Fire Watch

It is the owner's responsibility to cancel the fire watch once the fire protection system has been fully restored or after the end of the special circumstance or event.

Once the fire watch has been cancelled, the owner or representative must notify the monitoring company, and forward the Service Repair sheet to our office by fax 716-677-4488.

West Seneca Fire Watch Log

Facility Name
Address

Fire Watch Reason

Pre-scheduled
Emergency
Damage
Hidden
Maintenance

Type of System Impaired

Fire Sprinkler System
Private Hydrant
Fire Alarm
Fire Suppression
Outage to Building Fire Protection Water Supply

Responsibilities Of Fire Watch

The responsibilities of fire watch personnel include: performing constant patrols of the premises to watch for fires, report all fires to the 911 Dispatch Center, maintain a means of communication with the 911 Dispatch Center, record actions during watch, contact the Code Enforcement Office when system is back on line.

Fire Watch Personnel Names

Fire Dept Personnel Responding: Name Dept

Day and Time of initial incident

Day and Time System went back on line

At the end of the Fire Watch, please fax this form and the service sheet to the Code Enforcement Office 716-677-4488

"Fire Prevention Through Education and Enforcement"