

CHARLESTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Marshal Division

Information Bulletin

Fire Watch



The information contained within this document is intended to offer guidance for a facility or business that incurs impairment to a life safety system. When a required fire protection system (fire alarm, fire sprinkler, or other life safety system) is out of service **for any duration** the building shall either be evacuated or an approved Fire Watch shall be initiated. This document is intended to outline the minimum parameters of an acceptable Fire Watch. Additional requirements may be found in the International Fire Code or may be required by your insurance provider.

Responsibility:

- 1) It is the responsibility of the owner, occupant, or senior staff member in charge of a facility to provide for the safety of their employees, customers, or guests.
- 2) Every facility shall appoint an Impairment Coordinator who is responsible for complying with this document and the requirements outlined within the International Fire Code. In the absence of a specific designee the senior member of staff assumes this responsibility.
- 3) The Impairment Coordinator shall ensure Fire Watch's are properly trained and equipped, appropriate policies and procedures are in place, and proper documentation is maintained.
- 4) The Impairment Coordinator shall notify staff of the Fire Watch condition.
- 5) The Fire Marshal shall be notified of any impairment that will last longer than 4 hours by calling 720-1981. The Fire Marshal will again be notified upon restoration of the system.
- 6) A Fire Watch log (example on page 2 of this document or similar) shall be completed for each impairment. Upon restoration of the system the document(s) shall be faxed to the Fire Marshal at 720-3991. Copies must be maintained on the premises.
- 7) Any alarm system taken "off-line" must be done so by contacting your alarm monitoring company. Contacting the 911 center or the Fire Department is not sufficient.

When to implement a Fire Watch:

- 1) Planned or unplanned impairments of fire protection systems.
- 2) During hot work such as welding, spark, or heat producing work in a building.

Fire Watch role and responsibility:

- 1) Must be equipped with a cell phone or radio to directly notifying 911 of an emergency.
- 2) Their only duty is to perform constant patrols of the premises and keep watch for fire.
- 3) In an emergency the Fire Watch shall contact 911 and begin immediate evacuations.
- 4) Maintain a log of patrols and any unsafe conditions observed during their patrols.
- 5) Fire watch must be continued until the system is restored.

Contact the City of Charleston Fire Department – Fire Marshal Division at (843)724-3429 with any questions, comments or concerns.

