

*The following text is limited to general procedures. For specific projects, design team needs to tailor and establish "project-specific" procedures and requirements. Design team may use this web page as a guideline after they independently verify its contents and the applicability of the issues listed.*

## **Fire and Life-Safety Group (FLS)**

# **FIRE WATCH PROCEDURES**

(2007 Revision)

A fire watch is implemented to ensure the fire-safety of a building or area in the event of any act, e.g., hot work, or situation instigating an increased risk to persons or property. The term "Fire Watch" is used to describe a dedicated person or persons whose sole responsibility is to look for fires within an established area.

### **I. WHEN IS A FIRE WATCH REQUIRED?**

- When, in the opinion of the Fire and Life-Safety Group (FLS) of FM, it is essential for public safety in any place where people congregate, due to the number of persons, or the nature of the performance, exhibition, display, contest or activity, one or more qualified persons are to be employed to be on fire watch duty at such place.
- A fire watch is required when Hot Work is being performed. Details are specified on the Campus [Hot Work Permit](#) Form.
- A fire watch may be required in the event of temporary failure of the alarm system or where activities require the interruption of any fire detection, suppression or alarm system component which would conflict with the intent of NFPA 72. Note that a fire watch is required on a case by case basis as determined by University personnel. Further information is available under "Fire Alarm and Detection System Requirements for Interruptions" and "Fire Suppression Systems Requirements for Interruptions".

### **II. HOW IS A FIRE WATCH CONDUCTED?**

ASSEMBLIES: For assembly areas, the fire watch is to perform the following functions.

- Fire watch personnel are to keep diligent watch for fires in the general area of the performance. The persons performing the fire watch are not to be permitted to perform any other duties
- Fire watch personnel are to be familiar with facilities and procedures for sounding an alarm in the event of a fire.
- Fire watch personnel are to have fire extinguishing equipment readily available and be trained in its use, including practice on test fires.
- The quantity of personnel involved in the fire watch is to be adequate such that each floor, level, and room of the fire area is covered.

HOT WORK: During Hot Work Operations, the fire watch is to perform the following functions.

- Fire watch personnel are to keep diligent watch for fires in the general area where the work is being performed.
- Fire watch personnel are to be familiar with facilities and procedures for sounding an alarm in the event of a fire.
- Fire watch personnel are to have fire extinguishing equipment readily available and be trained in its use, including practice on test fires.

- Fire watch personnel are to inspect the site prior to hot work activities to ensure that combustibles are removed or covered and that any nearby holes or penetrations in the floor and walls are sealed or covered with fire-safe materials.
- Fire watch personnel are to watch for fires in all exposed areas. If a fire is located, fire watch personnel are to sound the evacuation alarm immediately and after that try to extinguish the fire only when obviously within the capacity of the equipment available.
- For Hot Work operations, the fire watch is to be maintained for at least 30 minutes after completion of cutting, welding, or other open flame operations to detect and extinguish smoldering and flaming fires. During this time, the work area and other adjacent areas, where sparks or flame may have traveled, are to be searched for signs of combustion.

FIRE SYSTEM INTERRUPTIONS: Fire watch requirements for fire system outages will be determined on a case by case basis based on extent of the interruption, building use, number of expected occupants, and expected outage time of the interruption. However, in general, a fire watch is to fulfill the intent of NFPA-72 as follows:

- Notify occupants to evacuate when there is a fire in the building.
- Notify the Central Monitoring station to initiate emergency personnel response.
- Activate fire protection systems, e.g., in order to release door holders, close smoke dampers, and shut down fans.
- The persons performing this type of fire watch are not to be permitted to perform any other duties; see IFC 901.7. Fire Systems Group personnel are to be responsible for determining the procedures to be followed for each specific circumstance. If uncertain about a specific situation, Fire Systems Group personnel are to contact FLS for direction.

### **III. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

If occupants assist with fire watch duties, the procedures for contacting emergency personnel and evacuating the building are to be distributed to building occupants. For planned outages, the procedures are to be sent to the building proctor for distribution. For unplanned outages, e-mail, fax machines, or other means are to be used to quickly inform occupants of the situations and provide necessary directions/procedures.

Refer to the following link for emergency and evacuation response procedures.

[Emergency Evacuation Procedures](#)