



**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
AND SAFETY**

**SAFETY GUIDELINE
Fire Watch**

The University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) and Nebraska Medicine have developed this guideline to minimize the risk of fire caused during periods of major construction, renovation, repair and/or maintenance, equipment testing or any activity that will render a fire detection or suppression systems inoperable or minimally effective for a period of time greater than 4 hours in any 24-hour period for fire alarm or 10 hours in any 24-hour period for suppression. In addition, Fire Watch may be assigned as an Interim Life Safety Measure (ILSM) if other fire safety features are compromised.

PURPOSE

To provide consistency in the Fire Watch implementation, as well as a place for UNMC and The Nebraska Medical Center employees to find fire watch related contact information in the event they have planned or unplanned fire system disruptions or outages.

- Planned Impairments:
 - For all The Nebraska Medical Center and UNMC main campus facilities and off-site clinics the fire watch request will go through the Impairment Coordinator (Life Safety Senior Associate or delegate).
- Emergency Impairments:

The onsite Plant Operations staff will notify and coordinate the fire watch with the Fire Watch staff and notify the Impairment Coordinator with all pertinent information needed for the impairment form.

DEFINITIONS

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 if an emergency; preventing a fire from occurring; extinguishing small fires; or protecting the public from fire or life safety dangers. (definition per NFPA 101, and 1, 2012)

Fire System Impairment: A condition where a fire protection system, component or function is inoperable.

Emergency fire system impairment – A condition where a fire protection system or portion thereof is out of service due to an unexpected occurrence, such as a ruptured pipe, an operated sprinkler, or an interruption of the water supply to the system.

Preplanned fire system impairment - A condition where a fire protection system or a portion thereof is out of service due to work that has been planned in advance, such as the revisions to the water supply, sprinkler system piping or fire alarm system or during periods of construction, testing, or maintenance where these systems are compromised.

Ceiling system impairment – This is a situation where one or more ceiling tiles or a hard ceiling is open thus negating the full effectiveness of the fire suppression system.

Impairment Coordinator: This is the individual whose role is to coordinate and assign fire watch to requested areas of facilities that have an impairment planned or emergent.

Restoration: The process of initiating operation of impaired fire suppression or fire alarm systems to an approved condition or operating status after an impairment.

PROCEDURE

When Fire Watch is Required:

When anything renders the approved fire alarm or fire suppression systems inactive for more than 4 hours in a 24-hour period (fire alarm) or 10 hours in a 24-hour period (sprinkler/suppression system), this is considered an Impairment and a fire watch or approved alternate fire systems is required. Fire watch can also be prescribed as an Interim Life Safety Measure (ILSM) when any approved life safety feature is breached. Fire Watch may also be required at times when the occupant load is exceeded and/or when required by the Authority Having Jurisdiction.

1. New Construction: For a building being constructed that is separated from any existing campus building (by an approved distance), the General Contractor is responsible for fire watch or hot work as required by construction permits within the confines of the construction area.

Note: During standard fire alarm or suppression testing only, the fire watch is not necessary as long as a properly qualified person is stationed at the panel through the duration of the testing activities while the system is not in full operation. Qualifications for this include experience with reading and interpreting the panel indications/alarms and knowledge of the buildings and areas monitored by that panel.

Qualifications for a Fire Watch Individuals include:

- Trained in the use and employment of a fire extinguisher through a class that employs “hands-on” operation of a fire extinguisher.
- Knowledge of these guideline, the building and its means of egress for area of responsibility.
- Knowledge of the fire notification system, the location of notification devices and procedures for notifying security, the fire department, and occupants.
- They should be trained to recognize fire hazards.

They should be briefed on the particular fire safety situation. Documentation of qualifications for Fire Watch personnel shall be kept by the fire watch contractor/employer so as to be made available for review upon demand.

Fire Watch Instructions

1. Fire Watch includes individuals walking continuous fire watch routes with awareness for any signs/smells of fire and assuring fire protection features and exits are intact. Fire Watchers noting any additional fire risks notify plus document the condition and status of impaired areas or conditions. Each site must be visited at least once per hour. The

arrival time check and initials of the Fire watch personnel shall be logged (See Attachment 1) and a barcode reader helps to document and confirm arrival time at the impairment. The fire watch inspection log can also be done electronically.

2. Any individual performing Fire Watch shall be trained to an appropriate level that will allow them to demonstrate how they will identify and immediately report fire incidents (involving fire / flame, smoke), use the campus emergency number, fire alarm pull stations, and if necessary, use extinguishing equipment. The Fire Watch person shall be able to identify and report any corridor or fire exit obstructions; report any collection of trash, combustible materials, and/or debris within all areas of the impairment and assure that no hazards are allowed to develop or remain which could cause or support a fire, or obstruct the access to exits, or access for fire-fighting personnel to a fire or emergency.

The fire watcher needs to know how to gain access to all areas of the building. For hazards of an unusual significance or safety concerns of an immediate nature (unusual amounts of trash, blocked exits, hazardous materials left unsecured, etc.) they shall immediately report the observed hazard to the Fire Watch Manager who will forward information to the Project Manager (PM) of the construction project. If the PM is not accessible, the Supervisor will contact the Director of Projects.

3. The Fire Watch shall document construction area hazards on daily inspection form, and will document the rounds, problems, and notifications. The fire watch log may be done electronically.
4. Anyone performing Fire Watch shall be assigned to do so exclusively. Fire Watch personnel shall not perform any action beyond normal staffing, such as assigning an additional individual to walk the areas affected and shall perform no duties other than those of Fire Watch and related ILSM documentation while the systems are disabled.
5. The individual(s) conducting Fire Watch shall walk through the affected area(s) on a continuous route from fire watch location to location, performing the required inspection of the site, fill out the Log and Inspection Record, scanning the bar code verifying time of inspection and moving on to the next location as expeditiously as possible.

Planned and Emergency Fire Watch

1. Planned Impairments: The Impairment coordinator is notified in advance of an impairment of a fire detection or fire suppression system for the prescribed time period. (Seven days advanced notice for main campus and at least fourteen days' notice for outside of main campus locations) Fire Watch shall be coordinated through the Impairment coordinator who shall forward the fire watch request to the fire watch team for the area requiring fire watch. The following information shall be provided to the Impairment Coordinator:
 - a. System to be impaired, fire alarm, fire suppression, or state other life safety feature to be impaired
 - b. Location, all areas and buildings affected by the impairment.
 - c. Approximate date and time the impairment shall begin and conclude.
 - d. Contact name and number reporting the system shutdown.

The Impairment Coordinator Project Manager or delegate will notify the occupants of any impairments, if necessary.

2. Emergency impairments: The Incident Leader (normally Zone Manager, Supervisor or Operations Lead) will establish a temporary fire watch binder with the information from 1 a-d, above, immediately contacting the Impairment Coordinator requesting a fire watch, immediately next contacting the Fire Watch supervisor to establish fire watch. The Impairment coordinator will review and establish a final working fire watch binder at the earliest opportunity.
3. Restoration: The Project Manager or person responsible for requesting the impairment shall contact the Impairment Coordinator or designee as early as possible to notify them of the expected restoration date/time and any changes to that date/time.

List of Attachments:

Attachment 1 - Fire Watch Inspection Log

References:

NFPA 101, 2012 Section 9.6.1.6 and 9.7.6

NFPA 25, 2011 Section 3.3.17 and Chapter 15 (Impairments)

Attachment 1 (Note this log may be kept electronically)

Fire Watch Inspection Log

Day _____ Evening _____ Night _____

DATE: _____ SITE TAG #: _____

Project Manager: _____

Hour	Time	Initials	Time	Initials	Time	Initials	Time	Initials	PM Initials
0:00									
1:00									
2:00									
3:00									
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23:00									

This Form should be kept in each project area and used to document rounds.
If the project spans more than one floor of a building this form should be placed on each floor.

NOTE: A 'FIRE WATCH INSPECTION ISSUES' FORM MUST BE COMPLETED
WHEN ANY DISCREPANCIES ARE FOUND FOR EACH SHIFT