

CITY of BERKELEY FIRE DEPARTMENT

“Fire Watch Requirements”

BACKGROUND

A Fire Watch is a physical inspection that is conducted when a building's fire alarm, sprinkler or other fire life safety systems are temporarily out of service.

Posting of a Fire Watch is the responsibility of the building owner or their designated representative.

Fire Watch personnel are required to continually patrol the facility for evidence and or the presence of smoke, fire, or any abnormal conditions that may or could affect the quality of life. Whenever a life-threatening situation is discovered, fire watch personnel must immediately have all necessary means to contact emergency personnel (via 911), and then alert the occupants and assist with the evacuation of the facility.

REQUIREMENTS

- N.F.P.A. 101 Life Safety Code requires that a Fire Watch be instituted anytime a sprinkler system, fire alarm, or other fire suppression system is out of service.
- Additionally, the Fire Marshal must be notified immediately of the situation when a fire system is out of service.

SELECTING FIRE WATCH PERSONNEL

- A person or persons who is selected to perform Fire Watch duties must be competent and responsible.
- Typically, hired security guards, or maintenance personnel and or building managers who are familiar with the building or as approved by the City of Berkeley Fire Department.. (May refer to NFPA 601 Guard Service in Fire Loss Prevention for additional information).

FIRE WATCH LOG

- A separate log identifying each building, or area, under the Fire Watch by name and address shall be kept.
- Log entries shall be made hourly at the completion of each round.
- Log entries shall consist of the date, the time the round was completed, a summary of what was observed, and the name and signature of the individual conducting the fire watch.

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DUTIES OF FIRE WATCH PERSONNEL

- Individuals who are selected for Fire Watch details shall throughough understand the purpose and responsibilities of their assignment.
- Specific procedures and instructions shall be given and understood regarding actions required. They shall also have a basic understanding and familiarization of the location, function, and normal status of the fire alarm and sprinkler systems, including fire pumps.
- Fire Watch personnel shall conduct hourly rounds by walking throughout the entire building or affected area, looking for evidence of smoke, fire, or any abnormal conditions.
- The specific route shall be laid out so that the Fire Watch person is required to pass through the entire area to be covered. Where special circumstances exist, such as the presence of exceptional hazards or large areas, additional patrols may be required by the Fire Marshal.
- Individuals selected shall know the location and operation of all portable fire extinguishers on site.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

- The individual conducting the Fire Watch shall be equipped with a cell phone for prompt notification of an emergency and have the phone numbers to notify Berkeley Fire Communications Dispatch.

Respectfully,

John W. Fitch,
Assistant Fire Chief/Fire Marshal