



CHARLOTTE FIRE DEPARTMENT
Fire Prevention Bureau
Standard Operating Guidelines

FPB 214.02

Fire Watch Requirements/Procedures

Effective Date: November 1, 2002

Approved: *Jonathan Leonard*

Jonathan Leonard, Deputy Fire Marshal

CHARLOTTE FIRE DEPARTMENT FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU

FIRE WATCH REQUIREMENTS/PROCEDURES

A “fire watch” is a temporary measure intended to ensure continuous and systematic surveillance of a building or portion thereof by no less than two qualified individuals for the purpose of identifying and controlling fire hazards, detecting early signs of unwanted fires, raising an alarm of fire and notifying the fire department during times when any fire protection system (i.e. fire alarm system, fire sprinkler system, etc.) is out of service or “off-line”.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Only the minimum possible number of devices or zones shall be disabled. Placing any fire protection system off-line or out of service **does not** relieve building personnel of the responsibility of notifying the fire department of any alarm or hazardous condition. If at **any time** during the fire watch period an alarm is reported or received at the panel, the fire department shall be notified immediately.

At least one trained building representative (security, building engineer, etc.) shall remain in close proximity to the fire alarm control panel at **all times** any portion of a fire protection system is off-line.

A. Specific Requirements

The following are requirements as set forth in the North Carolina State Fire Code and shall be used as a guide in following fire watch procedures.

SECTION 901.7 “SYSTEMS OUT OF SERVICE”

“Where a required fire protection system is out of service, the fire department and the code official shall be notified immediately and, where required by the code official, the building shall either be evacuated or an approved fire watch shall be provided for all occupants left unprotected by the shut down until the fire protection has been returned to service”.

1. *In this case, “systems” means both fire sprinkler systems and fire alarm systems.*
2. *You must register your system impairment at charlottefire.org (Click on the “Keeping You Safe” tab, move the mouse to “Fire Prevention Bureau” and choose “Register a Fire Alarm System Impairment” from the menu that appears to the right).*

“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 unprotected premises and keep watch for fires”.

1. *Security personnel **cannot** serve in this capacity if they also have security responsibilities. Additional personnel may be required.*
2. *Patrols of all unprotected areas at least once per hour and maintaining a fire watch checklist (area patrolled, by whom, time patrolled, etc.) will satisfy this requirement.*

SECTION 901.7.1 “IMPAIRMENT COORDINATOR”

“The building owner shall assign an impairment coordinator to comply with the requirement of this section. In the absence of a specific designee, the owner shall be considered the impairment coordinator”.

1. *Any building or premises that has a requirement for any fire protection system must have an impairment coordinator.*
2. *Nothing should happen to any fire protection system that the impairment coordinator is not aware of.*
3. *The impairment coordinator shall be the person responsible for making all notifications.*

SECTION 901.7.2 “TAG REQUIRED”

“A tag shall be used to indicate that a system, or portion thereof, has been removed from service”.

SECTION 901.7.3 “PLACEMENT OF TAG”

“The tag shall be posted at each fire department connection, system control valve, fire alarm control unit, fire alarm annunciator and command center, indicating which system or part thereof, has been removed from service. The code official shall specify where the tag will be placed”.

1. *Tag placement shall be as follows:*
 - A. *Sprinkler Systems, Standpipe Systems and Fire Pumps*
 - ❑ *Fire Department Connection(s)*
 - ❑ *OS&Y and/or PIV Valve(s)*
 - ❑ *Sprinkler Riser(s)*
 - ❑ *Command Center*
 - ❑ *Fire Pump Controller*

- ❑ *Alarm Panel*

B. Fire Alarm System

- ❑ *Command Center*
- ❑ *Annunciator Panel (main and/or remote)*

SECTION 901.7.4 “PREPLANNED IMPAIRMENT PROGRAMS”

“Preplanned impairments shall be authorized by the impairment coordinator. Before authorization is given, a designated individual shall be responsible for verifying that all of the following procedures have been implemented:”

1. The extent and expected duration of the impairment have been determined.
2. The areas and buildings involved have been inspected and the increased risks determined.
3. Recommendations have been submitted to building owner/manager.
4. You have registered your impairment at charlottefire.org or called 704-353-0970.

Do not call 911 for impairments. Be prepared to give name and title, brief details of impairment and duration

5. *The insurance carrier, the alarm company, building owner/manager and authorities having jurisdiction have been notified.*
6. *The supervisors in the areas to be affected have been notified.*
7. *A tag impairment system has been implemented.*
8. *Necessary tools and materials have been assembled on the impairment site.*

Repair parts and tools shall be on site **prior** to taking system out of service.

Section 901.7.5 “Emergency impairments”

“When unplanned impairments occur, appropriate emergency action shall be taken to minimize potential injury and damage. The impairment coordinator shall implement the steps outlined in section 901.7.4.

Fire watch in accordance with section 901.7 shall be implemented. If fire watch cannot be implemented and/or the impairment coordinator cannot be contacted, the fire official is authorized to order the building evacuated.

Section 901.7.6 “Restoring system to service”

“When impaired equipment is restored to normal working order, the impairment coordinator shall verify that all of the following procedures have been implemented:”

1. Necessary inspections and tests have been conducted to verify that affected systems are operational.
2. Supervisors have been advised that protection is restored.
3. The fire department has been advised that the protection is restored.
4. The building owner/manager, insurance carrier, alarm company, and other involved parties have been advised that protection has been restored.
5. The impairment tag has been removed.