

FIRE WATCH REQUIREMENTS DURING SHUTDOWN OF FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS



When is a fire watch required?

There are a few references in the National Fire Code – 2019 Alberta Edition (NFC(AE)) where alternative measures are required when fire protection systems are shutdown or inoperative (i.e. interruptions). Types of interruptions to fire alarm or sprinkler systems include, but are not limited to, periodic inspection or testing, maintenance and repairs of the fire alarm or sprinkler systems.

What are your responsibilities?

Alternative measures should be developed with the local fire department/authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) and is normally in the form of a fire watch. A fire watch is only intended as a short-term alternative that permits continued occupancy of the building. Immediate action of the building owner, business operator or management firm should be arranged to correct issues on the particular system, which is temporarily out of service or inoperative.

Fire watch can be by a responsible occupant, employee or contracted security guard whose sole responsibility is fire watch.

Appropriate alternative measures shall be in the form of a fire watch with the following requirements:

1. Dedicated fire watch personnel utilized/employed for fire watch service in a facility/building shall have knowledge of and be capable of performing the following functions:
 - Recognizing an emergency situation.
 - Transmitting an emergency warning to facility/building occupants.
 - Transmitting an emergency message to 911.
 - Operating equipment required for fire control and emergency warning.
2. No other duties shall interfere with a fire watch personnel's duties.
3. A sufficient number of fire watch personnel shall be utilized/employed to make at least one complete patrol of the area to be protected, including stairwells, every 60 minutes or less, depending on the risk and requirements of the AHJ.

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4. A process shall be in place to track the patrol route.
5. Each fire watch personnel shall be provided with a means of communication to 911 both within and outside of the facility/building required to be protected. (Cellular phone is acceptable).
6. Each fire watch personnel shall be advised of:
 - Route to be followed during patrol.
 - Details to be observed during the patrol.
 - Situations that require notification of emergency personnel.
 - Emergency notification instructions.
 - Fire safety plan emergency procedures relevant to the area(s) for which fire watch has been assigned.
 - Fire extinguishers and/or hose cabinet locations.

Fire watch shall be maintained until the fire alarm or sprinkler system is **fully operational**.

NOTE: Only those zones or areas affected by shutdown or are inoperative are required to have fire watch.

NOTE: Please contact the local Authority Having Jurisdiction for any questions regarding this Safety Tip.

Contact

Community and Technical Support branch of Municipal Affairs:

Hours: 8:15 am to 4:30 pm (open Monday to Friday, closed statutory holidays)

Toll free: 1-866-421-6929

Email: safety.services@gov.ab.ca

Please contact your local Fire Department for any questions regarding this Safety Tip.

