

## FIRE WATCH

PURPOSE: To establish a fire watch standard for the University

SCOPE:

A fire watch shall be posted whenever any of the following conditions exists:

- The fire protection sprinkler system is completely disabled or disabled to a point where the system cannot be relied upon to activate in the event of a fire.
- The standpipe system is completely disabled or disabled to a point where the system cannot be relied upon to deliver water for fire fighting operations.
- The fire alarm, fire protection sprinkler system, or standpipe system is more than 25% disabled; a fire watch shall be posted to tour the unprotected area.
- The fire alarm, fire protection sprinkler system, or standpipe system has been disabled on one or more floors of a building, a fire watch shall be posted to tour the unprotected area(s).
- If a representative of the State Fire Marshal's office or the FIU Fire Prevention Officer determines that a situation requires the posting of a fire watch.

### DEFINITIONS

Post: To place a fire watch.

Tour: A periodic inspection of the building or area for which a fire watch has been posted.

### GUIDELINES

#### Notification Of Intent To Post Fire watch

The Department of Environmental Health & Safety and the Public Safety Department shall be notified at least 24 hours in advance of any situation where it is foreseeable that any fire detection, suppression or protection system(s) will be completely or partially disabled. In the event of an unforeseen disablement of any fire detection, suppression or protection system(s), the Department of Environmental Health & Safety and the Public Safety Department shall be notified immediately and a fire watch shall be placed upon the building or area. In addition, both EH&S and Public Safety shall be notified once the system(s) has been placed back into a fully operational status. The fire watch on a building is shall not be lifted until the system(s) are fully operational.

#### Fire watch Requirements

Personnel assigned as fire watch, whether an FIU employee or outside contractor, shall meet the following minimum requirements:

- Must be 18 or older.
- Must be mentally alert.
- Must be able to effectively communicate in spoken English.
- Must be able to comprehend written English.
- Must be able to climb stairs that may be part of the building or area placed under the fire watch.

- Must be able to recognize the indicators of fire through the senses of sight, hearing and touch.
- Must be capable of using a two-way radio.
- Must be equipped with a radio capable of contacting the Public Safety dispatcher and a flashlight. Exception: Facilities that are not capable of contacting the Public Safety dispatcher via radio. In such case, reports shall be made via telephone.
- Must understand how to operate and be able to use a fire extinguisher.

### Fire watch Functions

The duties and functions of those personnel assigned as fire watch are as follows:

- Prompt discovery of fire and notification of the Public Safety Department.
- Operation of fire extinguishers after Public Safety has been notified and the alarm has been given.
- Monitoring signals of fire alarm systems.
- Detecting conditions likely to cause a fire.
- Detecting conditions likely to reduce the effectiveness with which a fire may be controlled, such as missing or discharged fire extinguishers or damaged fire safety equipment.

### Fire watch Procedures

Fire watch Record: A log shall be kept by the Public Safety dispatcher of the fire watch activities. This purpose of this log is to provide proof of the placement of a fire watch at times when fire protection systems are not functioning properly.

Fire watch Log Procedures: The following procedures shall be followed for completing the fire watch log:

- Fire watch shall notify the Public Safety dispatcher after completion of every tour. After business hours, the fire watch must contact the Public Safety dispatcher.
- Fire watch shall contact the dispatcher no less frequently than once per hour.
- The Public Safety dispatcher shall log the name of the watch, time of contact and reported condition at time of contact.
- Dispatcher shall contact the fire watch 10 minutes after failure to report. If the fire watch cannot be contacted, the dispatcher shall send a police officer to investigate.

Exception: In locations where contact with Public Safety is via telephone, Public Safety will contact the fire watch supervisor, if the fire watch fails to make a report within 10 minutes of the deadline.

### Patrolling

General: The following procedures shall be followed when the fire watch is patrolling:

- In the event that a fire is suspected, but cannot be confirmed, the fire watch shall contact the dispatcher, notify the dispatcher of the situation and request the assistance of a police officer.

Exception: In locations where contact with Public Safety is via telephone, the local fire department will be contacted first, followed by contacting Public Safety to report the situation.

- In the event that a fire is evident, the fire watch shall contact the dispatcher, notify the dispatcher of the situation, request the assistance of a police officer and give the alarm to the building.

Exception: In locations where contact with Public Safety is via telephone, the local fire department will be contacted first, followed by contacting Public Safety to report the situation.

- The fire watch shall not open any door to an area that is suspected of containing a fire. This could result in injury to the fire watch or extension of the fire into uninvolved areas.
- The dispatcher shall note the reports of such occurrences on the fire watch log.

Length of Patrol:

- One complete tour of the building or area, no longer than 45 minutes, shall be completed each hour. The remaining 15 minutes is a rest period. If, because of the size of the building or other circumstance, the tour cannot be completed by one fire watch in a 45-minute period, additional fire watches shall be posted.
- Fire watch shall not leave their patrol unless properly relieved.

Areas to be Patrolled:

- All hallway and common areas shall be patrolled. Laboratories, classrooms and offices are not required to be checked, unless specifically indicated by the Fire Prevention Officer. Personnel assigned to fire watch should be alert for signs of fire inside of a laboratory, classroom, or office. Signs may include:
  - the sight or smell of smoke
  - heat radiating from the door to a room
  - blistering paint on the door or walls of a room
  - "crackling" or "popping" noises originating from a room
  - flickering or glowing light under the door

In addition, if the building or area is equipped with a fire sprinkler system, the sound of spraying water may be heard or water may be seen leaking under the door. Should the fire watch observe any of these signs, a request should be made to Public Safety for a police officer. At no time should the fire watch investigate further without the presence of a police officer.

- Each tour shall include an inspection of the outside perimeter of the building.
- Particular attention should be given to new construction or alterations that may be in progress. The inspection by fire watch personnel under the authority of the University shall be conducted without entering the construction area.

First Round of Patrol: first round shall begin immediately after being posted. A thorough inspection of the building/area should be conducted at this time. During this first inspection, the fire watch should become familiar with the building layout, location of fire alarm pull stations and fire safety equipment.