



FIRE PREVENTION MANUAL
ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS
402.012 FIRE WATCH REQUIREMENTS
EFFECTIVE: JUNE 2008

SCOPE

This policy clarifies the Department's requirements for protection of life and property, in accordance with the California Fire Code. Generally, a fire watch is required as a mitigation measure when fire protection systems/features are out of service or damaged/altered; during construction and demolition of a structure or site; for welding and other hot work operations; for occasions when the use of the building is different than the classified occupancy type; or, for special events.

PURPOSE

This policy has been established to provide direction for a short-term alternative that allows the continued use and occupancy of any structure or business when it has been determined a component of the fire protection system is inoperative or that the use is different than the classified occupancy type.

REQUIREMENTS

When a fire protection system or feature is found to be damaged or inoperative:

- Determine the extent and expected duration of the impairment.
- Immediately obtain a contractor to initiate system or feature repairs.
- Notify the Fire Department for assistance in determining if a fire watch will be required. The need for a fire watch is based on an assessment of the operational status of a fire alarm, sprinkler system and/or fire protection feature.

When the use of the building is different than the classified occupancy:

- Notify the Fire Department for assistance in determining if a fire watch will be required. The need for a fire watch is based on an assessment of the current or temporary use of the building in relation to the classified occupancy type of the building.

Requirements for hiring fire watch personnel:

- Fire watch personnel shall be hired from a bonded licensed security firm by the building/premises owner or occupant. The number of personnel on fire watch shall be determined by the Fire Prevention Division.
- Fire watch personnel shall be scheduled and on-site from the time building/premises is unlocked until the building/premises is unoccupied and secured.
- In cases where a fire protection system is impaired, the fire watch shall be continuous, night and day, until the impairment is repaired, unless prior approval by the Fire Department is given to modify this requirement.
- Fire watch personnel shall be physically capable of performing fire watch duties.
- Fire watch staff and procedures will be subject to random review and/or inspection by the Fire Department at any time and additional requirements may be imposed as necessary.
- Discontinued use of the fire watch is subject to Fire Department approval.
- Additional specific fire watch requirements can be found in the *California Fire Code*.

PROCEDURES

Fire watch personnel shall be provided with written instructions, all job duty details and procedures to conduct their assignment. Create and maintain records specifying:

- a. Each employee must be provided training, including detailed fire watch requirements.
- b. Duties to be performed.
- c. Equipment to be used.
- d. Any personal protective equipment required to be made available and worn.

Equipment and knowledge for fire watch personnel:

- a. Cell phone, reliable flash light, and whistle.
- b. Fire watch logs and records.
- c. Knowledge of all exit paths and the location and proper use of portable fire extinguishers.

During operating hours, duties of fire watch personnel:

- a. Watch for fire hazards and incipient fires and exit obstructions.
- b. An inspection of the entire building must be conducted at least once per hour.

- c. Staff must be continuously awake and in the building at all times during their shift.
- d. A written log of the fire watch must be maintained. The log must include the date, time, status, and legible signature of the person performing the fire watch.
- e. The log may be picked up by the Fire Department when the impairment is restored.
- f. If the reason for the fire watch is due impairment of a fire protection system, the fire watch must be continuous, night and day, until the impairment is repaired.
- g. Call 9-1-1 immediately in the event of fire or other emergency.
- h. If the building is occupied, immediately notify the occupants as best as possible and evacuate the building at the first evidence of any fire or smoke.
- i. If necessary, contact other fire watches (if any), sound alarm via whistle and fire alarm pull station (if any); assist occupants in exiting the building.
- j. Be the first contact for emergency personnel responding to the building.
- k. If safe to do so, attempt to extinguish fire with a portable fire extinguisher.
- l. Continue the fire watch until it is cancelled.

CROSS REFERENCES

California Fire Code