



DC FIRE & EMS DEPARTMENT FIRE PREVENTION DIVISION



Fire Watch Guidelines & Implementation Procedures

A fire watch, whether ordered by the Fire Marshal, or requested by the building representative, shall be contained in a detailed written plan. Upon the completion of the written plan, the building contact/ responsible party shall submit the plan for approval to the Office of the Fire Marshal, located at 1100 4th Street SW Suite E700, Washington, DC 20024 prior to the close of business. This plan may be faxed to 202-727-3238, attention the “Fire Marshal.” Any documents faxed should be preceded by a phone call to 202-727-1614. The business hours of the Fire Marshal Office are 8:15 am to 4:45 pm Monday through Friday. If the fire watch is required after normal business hours, the responsible party shall prepare the plan and be guided by the Fire Marshal’s representative on the scene.

Plans

The fire watch plan submitted for approval shall include, but not limited to the following information:

1. Contract from a licensed monitoring/security company providing fire watch duties, and notation that personnel will only be utilized for fire watch duties.
2. Estimated duration of fire watch, estimated time for completion of repairs, estimated time for removal of hazardous conditions, or other specific situations which required the implementation of the fire watch. Note: In general fire watch in residential buildings will remain in place for 24 hours a day, and for commercial buildings will only be required while the building is occupied. The duration of the fire watch will be approved by the Fire Marshal.
3. Methods that will be utilized for identifying the fire watch personnel. The method of identification can be a vest, armband, highly visible shirt, or any other approved means.
4. Methods of communication to be used by fire watch personnel. Fire watch personnel are required to have radio communications between each other. This may be accomplished by the use of cell phones, direct connect, portable radios, etc.
5. Procedure to be used to rapidly notify the Fire Department and building occupants in the event of an emergency.

6. Number of personnel required to sufficiently conduct inspection of all affected areas of the building, and allow for employee breaks. Fire watch personnel shall check the building at least hourly. More frequent checks may be mandated if required by the Fire Marshal.
7. Special attention shall be paid to effected storage areas, janitor closets, utility spaces, basements, attics, penthouses, etc. and other normally unoccupied areas.
8. Identification of inspection routes to be utilized by fire watch personnel. Note: No partial fire watch patrols are permitted. The entire building must be patrolled.
9. Experience of personnel being utilized for fire watch. Fire watch personnel shall be familiar with the property being protected, including” hazards, occupancies, fixed fire protection systems, manual and automatic detection and alarm systems.
10. Provide method to be utilized to record history of fire watch activities. (Provide example of log book, inspection forms, etc.).
11. Plan shall include a written acknowledgement statement that indicates the building contact/responsible party understands that the guidelines must be adhered to as approved, appropriate action will be taken in accordance with IFC.

Owner’s Responsibility/Discontinuation of Fire Watch

It is the owner’s responsibility to request the”fire watch” be discontinued once the fire protection system has been fully restored or the hazardous situation has been abated. If the owner has received a “Notice of Violation,” re-inspection must be requested through the Office of the Fire Marshal. The fire watch shall “not” be discontinued until the fire department provides written authorization to stop or discontinue it. Random checks may be made Fire Marshal personnel to ensure all of the above provisions are being complied with.

Note: The DC Fire & EMS Department Office of the Fire Marshal recognizes NFPA 25, Inspection, Testing and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems, and does not consider the testing and maintenance of fire protection systems to be an “outage” if the system is restored within for (4) hours a fire watch is not required.