



## Environmental Health and Safety Office

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### FIRE WATCH GUIDE

| Version | Date         | Comments                        |
|---------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| 1       | January 2011 | Initial <i>Fire Watch Guide</i> |

#### A. INTRODUCTION

The Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code (F-901.7) and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 72 mandate that a “fire watch” be implemented under certain conditions whenever a fire suppression or fire alarm system is out of service or compromised. Notification must be made to the Environmental Health and Safety Office (EHS) when a fire suppression or fire alarm system is out of service, under repair, or otherwise inoperable to determine if a fire watch is warranted.

#### B. SCOPE

This Guide applies to all university-owned buildings, and Mason employees and contractors. Fire watch requirements for system outages and impairments will be determined on a case by case basis taking into consideration the extent of the interruption, building use, number of expected occupants, and expected outage time of the interruption. Upon notification of a fire suppression or fire alarm outage, EHS Fire Safety Programs personnel are responsible for determining if a fire watch is warranted.

#### C. RESPONSIBILITIES

EHS shall be responsible for conducting a fire watch during any scheduled fire alarm or fire suppression system test, maintenance, or repair, conducted or coordinated by EHS. Facilities Project Managers, Facilities Inspectors, or facilities management personnel (i.e., Office of Housing and Residence Life, Student Centers, or Intercollegiate Athletics, etc.) are responsible for establishing a fire watch for the buildings which they oversee whenever a system fails or maintenance and/or repairs are necessary. These agencies are responsible for ensuring that the fire watch is conducted in accordance with the procedures outlined in this guide.

#### D. NOTIFICATION

Whenever scheduled repairs demand that a fire suppression or fire alarm system be taken out of service, notification must be made to EHS ((703) 993-8448) and the Office of Risk Management ((703) 993-2599). Additionally, when it is discovered that a fire suppression or fire alarm system is inoperable due to damage, utility failure, or operates improperly, EHS and the Office of Risk Management must be notified. When reporting such an outage, include the following information:

1. Location of the system;
2. System(s) impacted and corresponding areas of coverage;
3. Anticipated duration of the outage;
4. Suspected reason for the outage if know; and
5. Name and contact information.

## **E. PROCEDURES**

A fire watch is defined as, “the assignment of a qualified person or persons for the express purpose of notifying the fire department, the building occupants, or both of an emergency; preventing a fire from occurring; extinguishing small fires; or protecting the public from fire or life safety dangers”. The responsibilities of an individual assigned to fire watch duty is to fulfill the intent of NFPA-72 as follows:

- Notify occupants to evacuate when there is a fire in the building.
- Notify the University Police (703) 993-2810 to initiate emergency personnel response.
- Activate fire protection systems (if available and operational) in order to release door holders, close smoke dampers, and shut down fans.
- The persons performing this type of fire watch are not to be permitted to perform any other duties; Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code 901.7. EHS Fire Safety Programs personnel are to be responsible for determining the procedures to be followed for each specific circumstance.

Individuals assigned to fire watch duty are responsible for the following:

1. Post signage (Appendix A) throughout the building to notify occupants that a fire watch is being conducted and the appropriate response if a fire or smoke is discovered.
2. Have an understanding of basic fire prevention and fire extinguishment techniques.
3. Be proficient in the operation of the fire alarm and suppression system the area(s) impacted by the outage.
4. Have an understanding of and the ability (i.e., access to a phone, cell phone, or radio) to immediately contact University Police (703) 993-2810 in case of an emergency or fire.
5. Conduct a routine and thorough walk of all locations impacted by the system outage at least once per hour.
6. Note the location of portable fire extinguishers.
7. Notifying occupants to evacuate the building in the event of a fire by verbal warning, whistle, horn, or other notification device.
8. Fire watch personnel are to have fire extinguishing equipment readily available and be trained in its use.
9. Maintain a log of activities, findings, and incidents throughout the fire watch using the *Fire Watch Checklist* (see Appendix B).
10. Remove fire watch signage once the fire watch is complete.
11. Witness and acknowledge that both the fire suppression and alarm systems are fully operation and back online with notification made to University Police Dispatch prior to leaving the facility.

# Attention Occupants

## FIRE WATCH IN PROGRESS

*Fire alarm or sprinkler system is out-of-service for repairs, construction, or maintenance.*

Qualified individuals are conducting a continuous tour of common areas to provide smoke and/or fire detection. Please be alert to evidence of smoke or fire. Contact University Police at **(703) 993-2810** or **911** immediately if fire is seen or suspected.

**Evacuate the building immediately upon hearing an air horn, whistle, or other alert.**

**Appendix B: Fire Watch Checklist**

| <b>Fire Watch Checklist</b>   |        |         |                   |               |  |
|---|--------|---------|-------------------|---------------|--|
| Building:   |        |         | Date:             |               |  |
| Expected Duration System Outage (include days and/or hours):                                    |        |         |                   |               |  |
| Means of Notifying Building Occupants (i.e. verbal command, whistle, horn):                     |        |         |                   |               |  |
| <b>Fire Watch Personnel</b>   |        |         |                   |               |  |
| 1st Watch Hours:  |        | Name:   |                   | Phone Number: |  |
| 2nd Watch Hours:  |        | Name:   |                   | Phone Number: |  |
| 3rd Watch Hours:  |        | Name:   |                   | Phone Number: |  |
| <b>Area(s) That Require a Fire Watch</b>  |        |         |                   |               |  |
| Building:   | Floor: |         |                   | Area:         |  |
|   | Floor: |         |                   | Area:         |  |
|   | Floor: |         |                   | Area:         |  |
|   | Floor: |         |                   | Area:         |  |
| <b>Fire Watch Patrol Log: <i>Patrol of affected areas must be conducted at least hourly</i></b> |        |         |                   |               |  |
| Time 1  |        | Time 7  |                   | Time 13       |  |
| Time 2  |        | Time 8  |                   | Time 14       |  |
| Time 3  |        | Time 9  |                   | Time 15       |  |
| Time 4  |        | Time 10 |                   | Time 16       |  |
| Time 5  |        | Time 11 |                   | Time 17       |  |
| Time 6  |        | Time 12 |                   | Time 18       |  |
| <b>Comments</b>   |        |         |                   |               |  |
|   |        |         |                   |               |  |
| <b>Project Completion Date:</b>   |        |         | <b>Signature:</b> |               |  |