

**UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY**

Policy No.: FS008	Approved by: Mark Cavanaugh
Title: Fire Watch Policy	Date: 11/19/2020
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Prepared by: Scott Miller	

I. PURPOSE

This policy outlines the guidelines for posting a fire watch if the fire alarm and/or fire suppression system in any University building becomes inoperable and the building needs to remain occupied. A fire watch allows buildings to be temporarily occupied when the above-mentioned systems are out of service. EH&S may require occupants out of a building if the fire system impairments are significant enough and there is no fire watch in place.

This policy also outlines the guidelines for posting a fire watch for recreational fires.

II. PERSONNEL AFFECTED

University Public Safety, Facilities, Environmental Health & Safety staff, students, faculty, staff and outside contractors

III. DEFINITIONS

EH&S- Environmental Health and Safety (department of the University of Rochester)

Fire Watch (responsible person) - A person trained in the safety and fire safety consideration concerned with hot work, fire suppression or detection system impairments, or recreational fires. Fire watch is a qualified person who ensures a systematic surveillance of a building or portion of the building or activity. They function as the fire alarm system to report fires or similar emergencies to University Public Safety and to initiate evacuation of a building if a fire or emergency occurs. Fire Watch personnel must be trained in the University's Procedure for Reporting Fire Emergencies and possess a means of communicating with the Public Safety Communications Center. Fire watch personnel shall carry a functional cellular phone/radio while on duty, and be familiar with the emergency number for UR Public Safety, dial X13 from a UR house phone or 275-3333 from a cell phone.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

University Public Safety– monitors status of fire detection/suppression systems and notify EH&S of any problems. Provides initial fire watch duties up to 8 hours or until relieved by another qualified fire watch.

EH&S staff – assess reported problems and determine necessary subsequent processes

Outside Contractors – coordinates and maintains fire watches coverage as necessary

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Facilities and all other University or contract personnel –responsible for identifying fire watch to relieve public safety or providing fire watch for scheduled system impairments.

Recreational Fires – Trained fire watch will maintain constant monitoring of area so if fire extinguisher or garden hose is needed for an emergency, it is readily available for use. If garden hose is to be used, it must be turned on prior to the fire watch to ensure that there is adequate flow from the water supply.

V. PROCEDURES

- A.** Public Safety will immediately inform EH&S if a fire detection or suppression system is impaired.
- B.** EH&S will perform an assessment of the impairment and based on that assessment use these guidelines.
- C.** Based on EH&S assessment and the magnitude of the impairment, a fire watch might be established in a building when the building is occupied and the fire detection and/or fire suppression system is temporarily shut down. Based on EH&S assessment, EH&S will define the fire watch scope (i.e. continuous or rounding fire watch every so many hours) the areas affected by the outage or malfunction will be covered until the system has been repaired, tested and placed back into service.
- D.** The initial fire watch coverage for an emergent situation will be by Public Safety for up to 8 hours. Public Safety may be relieved sooner by Facilities, EH&S or other personnel who have been trained or approved by EH&S, including students, faculty/staff and contractors outside the University.
 - a.** The initial fire watch duties for emergencies at the MAG will be MAG Security when on duty; Rochester Management for Rochester Management managed properties and the Landlord for buildings not owned by the University.
- E.** For emergent fire watch activities, Public Safety will notify the Facilities Supervisor on call to discuss the impairment and expected duration. If the impairment looks like it will be extended, the Facilities Supervisor on Call will contact the contracted fire watch company via a service request. Once the fire watch contractor has been notified, the Facilities Supervisor on Call will contact the Fire Safety Specialist so they may train the contractors.
- F.** Contractors will be responsible for implementing a fire watch for impairments caused by construction work. Each affected floor may require a trained person as determined by EH&S.
- G.** A fire watch shall consist of trained personnel who patrol the affected area, who have access to a fire extinguisher and the ability to promptly notify University Public Safety. During the patrol of the area, the fire watch should

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not only be looking for fire, but also making sure other fire protection features of the building such as egress routes, minimized combustible loading, ignition sources are controlled and proper lighting are available and functioning properly.

- H.** Fire Watch personnel must perform their fire watch duties as outlined by EH&S. They must check-in at the beginning and ending of each shift and sign the log as defined by EH&S (i.e. hourly, every 2 hours, every 4 hours, etc.). Personnel must provide UR Fire Marshal with final documentation, which will include the names for personnel, and all shift dates and times for duration of the required fire watch. (See Attachment A)
- I.** A fire watch will be conducted until the fire alarm and/or suppression system has been repaired, tested, and placed back into service.
- J.** For unoccupied buildings, EH&S may request Public Safety to perform a special attention to the building meaning they will observe the building at least twice per shift until the system is restored or fire watch have been assigned to the building.
- K.** For system impairments, EH&S will notify the Monroe County Emergency Communications Department (ECD) by calling 585-528-2222 and University of Rochester insurance carrier of the malfunction or planned outage of a building fire alarm and/or suppression system.
- L.** For system restorations, EH&S will notify ECD and University of Rochester insurance carrier the system has been repaired, tested and placed back in service and the fire watch is being terminated.
- M.** The fire watch shall immediately notify University Public Safety of any reports of smoke or flames in the building protected by a fire watch.
- N.** Fire watch is dedicated to that function and shall not leave their post until approved by the University Fire Safety Specialist or University Public Safety Officer.
- O.** A fire watch shall observe for and have corrected the following in all rooms including:
 - Resident rooms (remove smoking materials and extension cords);
 - Dietary and laundry rooms (remove lint from dryers and soiled linen);
 - Mechanical and electrical rooms (remove combustible/flammable materials);
 - Fire department access to the facility (remove snow and ice from exits);
 - Fire department access to hydrants, sprinkler connections, standpipes and fire extinguishers;
 - All exits shall be clear of obstructions.

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- Storage of combustible or flammable materials shall be in approved containers or designated storage areas;
 - Identify temporary heating devices and have them removed,
 - Fire and smoke doors closed properly;
 - Machinery unnecessary to be running continuously is turned off;
 - Sprinkler valves shall be open and sealed, gauges indicate normal pressures, and sprinkler heads shall be unobstructed;
- P.** Additional fire extinguishers could be distributed and staff informed of locations for suppression system impairments.
- Q.** Additional noise makers or megaphones would be required if the audible component of the fire alarm system failed.
- R.** There is to be no hot work in a building where a sprinkler system is impaired. EH&S is to notify anyone having a hot work permit in the building impacted that the permit has been temporarily revoked.
- S.** In a building which has an impaired fire detection system, it is up to EH&S to assess the impairment and its impact on the hot work activities. Fire watch for recreational fires will ensure limited combustibles are used while the fire is contained in the fireplace or barrel.
- a.** No flammable or combustible liquids shall be used to kindle or rekindle the fire; only clean material may be used (no construction debris, hazardous materials, rubber, plastic material, etc.)
 - b.** The area within a five (5) foot radius of the recreational fire shall be reasonably clear of all combustibles.
 - c.** They will monitor weather condition so, when winds exceed 10 MPH, the fires are to be extinguished.
 - d.** The fire watch will monitor the fire to ensure no hot embers leave the container.
 - e.** The fire watch will monitor activity around the fire to ensure no one is too close to the fire and there is no horseplay around the fire.
 - f.** They will have a fire extinguisher or garden hose readily accessible to extinguish the fire.
 - g.** For any fire that leaves the container, they shall immediately notify Public Safety at X13 or via cell phone at #413.
 - h.** The fire must be fully extinguished when unattended.
- T.** A hot work permit is required for any recreational fire. The hot work permit may be terminated by EH&S or Public Safety.

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U. For emergency fire watch activities, facilities will be responsible to ensure the associated cost will go against the building account.

VI. REFERENCES

New York State Fire Code 901.7
National Fire Protection Association NFPA 101-18; 25-17; 72-16
Office of Residential Life and Housing Services – Jackson Court Fireplace Use Policy

VII. APPENDICES/FORMS

Attachment A – Fire Watch sign-in sheet

VIII. REVISION HISTORY

Date	Revision No.	Description
10/9/2007	New	Establish written procedures for when a fire watch is needed and how one is conducted.
4/16/2009	1	Provide additional instructions on fire watch responsibilities
6/30/2010	2	Clarification of fire watch frequency
9/12/2012	3	Add recreational fire watch requirements
6/21/2016	4	Three Year Review and updates
8/29/2017	5	Added language for emergency fire watch coverage
11/19/2020	6	Clarified language and updated reference editions.

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Attachment A

Fire Watch Sign-In Sheet

Location of Fire Watch: _____

Date of Fire Watch	Time Started	Time Ended	Printed Name of Fire Watch	Signature of Fire Watch	Printed Name of Security/Facility Manager Check In	Signature of Security/Facility Manager Check In

**Please return this sheet to the Fire Marshal's Office at RC Box 278878.
Attention: Fire Safety Specialist**

Thank you for your cooperation!