

# Fire Watch Policy

## Fire Alarm or Fire Suppression System Interruption

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This policy shall apply to any situation in which a fire suppression system (e.g., building sprinkler system) or fire alarm and detector system is disabled (referred to in this policy as a “system interruption”). Such systems may be disabled because of emergencies, such as power outages or broken water lines, or due to vandalism, repeated false alarms, construction projects or system malfunctions.

### I. REPORTING PROCEDURES

The following procedures shall be followed in the event of a system interruption in any campus building:

1. The Office of Public Safety shall be notified and an officer shall report to the building immediately to determine if there is an immediate threat to life or personal safety.
2. The Office of Public Safety shall contact emergency authorities if necessary.
3. The Office of Public Safety shall notify FMS, if not already notified.
4. FMS shall contact the college’s contractor in the event of a system malfunction and inform the Office of Public Safety of the estimated response and repair time.
5. FMS shall contact the college’s property insurer to report the outage of a fire suppression or fire alarm system if the outage will last eight hours or longer.
6. If a residential building is involved, the Office of Public Safety shall notify the on-call Residential Life Coordinator, who shall notify all Resident Assistants in the affected building(s).
7. Depending on the extent of the interruption (e.g., one building or entire campus), building use, current number of occupants, expected time of duration, and time of day, at the direction of the Office of Public Safety:
  - local emergency authorities shall be notified of the outage
  - building occupants shall be notified that the system is not functioning by e-mail, in person or through posting of signage in the building
  - no hazardous work may be performed in the vicinity that could represent a potential fire ignition source such as welding or burning
  - in consultation with FMS, consideration will be given to providing temporary water supply to the building, such as hose or PVC above ground line from a hydrant connection to the sprinkler riser; and/or
  - a fire watch shall be initiated.
8. FMS shall notify the Office of Public Safety when the system has been restored and the Office of Public Safety shall notify fire watch personnel when the fire watch is ended. In the event of a sprinkler system outage of eight hours or longer, FMS shall also notice the college’s property insurer when the system has been restored.

## II. FIRE WATCH PROCEDURES

The Office of Public Safety shall provide personnel to perform fire watches in all buildings. If there is insufficient Public Safety staff to perform the fire watch in a residential building, the Office of Public Safety shall contact the Residential Life Coordinator on call who shall perform fire watch services. In non-residential buildings, fire watch services shall be provided by the on-call FMS maintenance personnel, in the event there is insufficient Public Safety staff to perform the fire watch.

1. A fire watch form shall be completed whenever a fire watch is implemented and shall be maintained on file by the Office of Public Safety (Appendix A);
2. Only trained fire-watch personnel (Public Safety officers, FMS maintenance personnel and Residential Life coordinators) shall conduct the fire watch. Fire watch personnel must be trained in the following areas:
  - Fire extinguisher procedures
  - Procedures for reporting an emergency
  - Evacuation procedures
  - Knowledge of the building and the various rooms contained within the building
  - Fire awareness and recognition of obvious hazards
3. A public safety officer shall remain in the building until a fire watch is established;
4. Fire watch personnel are responsible for performing the following duties:
  - The assigned fire watch personnel or his/her relief person shall remain in the building night and day, until the fire watch is ended;
  - Fire watch personnel shall remain vigilant at all times and are not permitted to perform any other duties during the fire watch;
  - When each fire watch personnel takes over duties, he/she shall ensure that all exits are unobstructed and all stairwells are free from storage, and shall review the specific evacuation plan for the building;
  - Fire watch personnel shall conduct an hourly check of each floor (a half-hourly check in residence halls) in order to detect any signs of smoke, fire, or any other life safety hazard that might exist in any room;
  - Fire watch personnel conducting a fire watch in a building in which the alarm system is not functioning shall have with them at all times during the fire watch a bull-horn or some other loud device with which they can notify people in the event of an emergency during the fire watch and a public safety radio with which they can contact emergency personnel, if necessary;
  - A log of the fire watch shall be maintained and submitted to the Office of Public Safety at the end of the fire watch (Appendix B);
  - Fire watch personnel shall report to the Office of Public Safety on an hourly basis;
  - In the event of an emergency, fire watch personnel shall contact the Office of Public Safety immediately, and direct occupants to the nearest safe exit;
  - Fire watch personnel are not required to fight fires and may only use a fire extinguisher if trained to do so and if the fire is the size of a small wastebasket or smaller.

### **III. CONTACT**

Questions about this policy should be addressed to the Director of [Public Safety](#).

### **IV. HISTORY**

Adopted October 2007

Revised January 2019

Updated October 2019