



What is a Fire Watch?

A fire watch is a temporary measure for the purposes of ensuring the fire-safety of a building or premises in the event of any act or situation which creates an increased risk to persons or property. The term fire watch is also used to describe a dedicated person or persons whose sole responsibility is to look for fires and other hazards within a building, specific area, or premises.

What is the purpose of a fire watch?

The purpose of a fire watch is to provide temporary surveillance in a building or premises for the purposes of identifying and controlling fire hazards, detecting early signs of unwanted fire, initiating alarms or evacuation procedures, and notifying the fire department.

How long can a fire watch remain in effect?

In general, a fire watch is to be used only as a temporary means to provide either an extra level of safety (in the case of a special event or hot work operation) or to supplant an out of service life safety system. A fire watch cannot be used as a technique to avoid or delay the installation or repair of a required fire sprinkler, fire alarm, or other life safety system. Fire Watch is permitted for up to 48 hours using the available personnel at the location. Our jurisdiction requires a Licensed and Bonded security company to perform Fire Watch if the anticipated impairment is going to last more than 48 hours (IFC 901.7 – 2015 IFC). An Impairment worksheet must be completed if the Fire Watch is anticipated to last more than 48 hours. Hot work requires that a fire watch last throughout the duration of the operation and at least 30 minutes after the conclusion of work. The 30-minute time period may be extended by the fire code official depending on the nature of work or hazards present.

What are the duties of fire watch personnel?

Fire watch personnel shall:

- Have access to one approved means of communication; know the exact address of the property, and how to report a fire or other emergency condition by calling 9-1-1.
- Be familiar with the buildings and property and have an accepted written plan for patrolling the property.
- Be trained in the use of fire extinguishers shall have access to all facility fire extinguishers and know their location.
- Have knowledge of and be trained in the facility's evacuation plan in the event of a fire. They shall be able to communicate with non-English speaking residents well enough to give an evacuation order.
- Not be permitted, while on duty, to perform any other duties.
- Not be impaired and shall always remain awake and alert.
- Record time and date every hour that fire watch was conducted.

Reference: IFC, NFPA 101, NFPA 72, NFPA 25, Zone 3 Fire Watch Form

Community Risk Reduction

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