



# ST JOHNS COUNTY FIRE RESCUE



## FIRE WATCH GUIDELINES

### BACKGROUND

A life safety feature when operational provides early detection and/or suppression of a fire. A fire alarm system can detect the early stages of a fire and alert the occupants that there is an emergency and aid in the evacuation of the building. A fire sprinkler system when operational can detect, contain and even extinguish a fire before it can grow to a size that may endanger the occupants of the building and help to protect egresses for a safer evacuation.

The Florida Fire Prevention Code defines a Fire Watch as: The assignment of a person or persons to an area 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.

### WHEN IS A FIRE WATCH REQUIRED?

Standby Fire Personnel or an approved "Fire Watch" may be ordered when potentially hazardous conditions or a reduction in a life safety feature exist due to the type of performance, display, exhibit, occupancy, contest or activity, an impairment to a fire protection feature, or the number of persons present.

NFPA 1:1.7.16

A Fire Watch is also required when a fire sprinkler system or fire alarm system is out of service for more than 4 hours in a 24 hour period due to maintenance or failure of the system.

NFPA 1:13.1.9, 13.7.1.4.4

### OWNER RESPONSIBILITIES?

- Establish, instruct and maintain fire watch personnel.
- Notify the fire alarm monitoring company, if applicable.
- Notify the St. Johns County Fire Marshal's Office that the system is not working and again when the system has been repaired. Call the Fire Marshal's Office at 904-209-1740. (You may leave a voice-mail if after hours.)
- Contact the repair company to fix the fire protection system(s).
- If a Notice of Violation has been written, contact the fire inspector when the system has been repaired. The inspector's phone number will be on the Notice of Violation.

### AUTHORITY OVER FIRE WATCH PERSONNEL?

Standby fire personnel or fire watch personnel shall be subject to the AHJ's orders at all times and shall be identifiable and remain on duty during the times such places are open to the public, when such activity is being conducted, or as required by the AHJ.

NFPA 1:1.7.16.3

### FIRE WATCH DUTIES?

Personnel serving as a fire watch have the following duties:

- Conduct patrols of the entire facility as specified.
- Identify any fire, life or property hazards.
- If a fire is discovered, notify St. Johns County Fire Rescue by calling 9-1-1, and give the exact address and type of emergency.
- Notify the occupants of the facility of the need to evacuate. If the sirens or public address function of the alarm system are still functional, use them to assist with the evacuation of the building.
- Determine at least one means of direct communication with the Fire Department. A telephone is acceptable.
- Maintain a log of fire watch activities.
- Have knowledge of the location and use of fire protection equipment, such as fire extinguishers.
- Fire watch personnel shall not have other duties besides their assigned fire watch.

However, the Fire Department may designate other duties.

**Note:** Fire watch personnel will not perform fire-fighting duties beyond the scope of the ordinary citizen.

### FREQUENCY OF INSPECTIONS?

Fire watch personnel are to patrol the entire facility every 15 minutes in the following situations:

- The facility has people sleeping.
  - The facility is an institutional occupancy.
  - The facility is an occupied assembly occupancy.
- Facilities that do not meet the requirements for a 15-minute patrol frequency should have a fire watch patrol every 30 minutes.

For facilities that are not identified as b) and/or c) above, but have people sleeping at certain times, will be permitted to conduct the patrols at 30 minute intervals when NO sleeping is being conducted.

The Fire Watch log shall note the sleeping times.

# FIRE WATCH LOG

Address where fire watch is being conducted: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for fire watch: \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_, Watch Person: \_\_\_\_\_, Notes: \_\_\_\_\_



Contact  
St Johns County Fire Rescue's  
Fire Marshal's Office  
to answer any questions regarding  
fire watch requirements, duties, or responsibilities.  
**904.209.1740**