

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Health Facilities and Emergency Medical Services Division Policy Manual		Section: LIFE SAFETY
		Part:
Subject: Life Safety Code Fire Watch Requirements		Page:
Date: January 2010	<input type="checkbox"/> Replacement page(s) of part ____ <input type="checkbox"/> Addition of page(s) to part ____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Section	

SUMMARY

The Federal Certification and State Licensure regulations require a building owner to provide a Fire Watch if a fire protection system fails. Further, a local authority having jurisdiction may also require a Fire Watch under these circumstances or if there are an excessive number of accidental activations or nuisance alarms or during a special circumstance or event. Personnel to conduct the Fire Watch are typically determined by the building owner but a local authority having jurisdiction may have other professional certification or experience requirements. Whenever there are multiple requirements to establish a Fire Watch the higher (most restrictive or specific) standard shall apply. This document serves to establish the minimum standards for an established Fire Watch within health facilities regulated by the Health Facilities and Emergency Medical Services Division of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (Division).

BACKGROUND

Definition of a Fire Watch

The Division’s adopted 2000 edition (applicable for all facilities except Assisted Living Residences and Acute Treatment Units) and the 2003 edition (applicable for Assisted Living Residences) of the Life Safety Code (LSC) both define a Fire Watch as “A person or persons assigned to an area for the purposes of protecting the occupants from fire or similar emergencies” (*LSC, 2000 ed., 3.3.77 and 2003 ed., 3.3.81*). The 2006 edition (which the Division has adopted for Acute Treatment Units) further clarifies the role of the Fire Watch. The 2006 definition reads “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.” (*LSC 2006 ed., 3.3.91*)

Requirements for a Fire Watch

The Division’s three adopted Life Safety Codes contain the same requirements for implementation of a Fire Watch. In relation to Fire Detection, Alarm, and Communication Systems the LSC reads:

“Where a required fire alarm system is out of service for more than 4 hours in a 24-hour period, the authority having jurisdiction shall be notified, and the building shall be evacuated or an approved Fire Watch shall be provided for all parties left unprotected by the shutdown until the fire alarm system has been returned to service.” (*LSC, 2000 ed., 9.6.1.8; 2003 ed., 9.6.1.7; and 2006 ed., 9.6.1.6*)

In relation to Automatic Sprinklers and Extinguishment Equipment the LSC reads:

“Where a required automatic sprinkler system is out of service for more than 4 hours in a 24-hour period, the authority having jurisdiction shall be notified, and the building shall be evacuated or an approved Fire Watch shall be provided for all parties left unprotected by the shutdown until the sprinkler system has been returned to service.” (*LSC 2000, 2003, and 2006 eds., 9.7.6.1*)

POLICY GUIDANCE

For the sake of meeting the Division's requirements (as the Authority Having Jurisdiction for the State of Colorado) for an "approved Fire Watch" as referenced in the LSC the following shall be adhered to as a minimum requirement. Any requirements above and beyond these requirements by the local Authority Having Jurisdiction (typically the local Fire Department) shall also be adhered to.

Facility Administrator's or Owner's Responsibilities

- a) Establish, instruct and maintain enough Fire Watch personnel to complete the assigned duties with the frequency as outlined below.
- b) Notify the fire alarm monitoring company.
- c) Notify the Division's Life Safety Code Manager at (303) 915-9687 that the system is not working and again when the system has been repaired.
- d) Notify the local Fire Department.
- e) Contact the repair company to fix the fire protection system(s).

Personnel Serving as a Fire Watch have the Following Duties:

- a) Conduct periodic patrols of the entire facility (or affected area if the outage is limited in scope to a certain wing, zone, or floor) as specified in this policy.
- b) Identify any fire, life or property hazards.
- c) Notify the Fire Department if a fire is discovered by calling 9-1-1 (or other local emergency notification phone number) with the exact address and type of emergency.
- d) Notify occupants of the facility of the need to activate the facility's evacuation and relocation plan. If the sirens or public address function of the alarm system are still functional, use them to assist with implementing the plan as appropriate.
- e) Determine at least one means of direct communication with the Fire Department. A telephone or radio is acceptable.
- f) Maintain a log of Fire Watch activities.
- g) Have knowledge of the location and use of fire protection equipment, such as fire extinguishers.
- h) Fire Watch personnel cannot have other duties besides their assigned Fire Watch except those assigned to the Fire Watch by the local Fire Department.

Note: The Fire Watch will not perform fire-fighting duties beyond the scope of the ordinary staff person in the facility.

Frequency of Inspections

Fire Watch personnel should continuously patrol the entire facility (or affected area) in a manner such that the entire patrol area is inspected a maximum of every 15 minutes in the following situations:

- a) The facility has people sleeping.
- b) The facility is currently occupied by any resident who is not capable of exercising judgment and appropriate physical action for self-preservation under emergency conditions.
- c) The facility contains an occupied assembly occupancy.

Facilities that do not meet the requirements for a 15-minute patrol frequency should have a Fire Watch patrol frequency a maximum of every 30 minutes.

Record Keeping

A Fire Watch log should be maintained at the facility. The log must be available at all times during the Fire Watch and faxed to the Division's Life Safety Code Manager upon termination of the Fire Watch. The log should show the following:

- 1) Name and Address of the facility.
- 2) Times that the patrol has completed each tour of the facility.
- 3) Name of the person conducting the Fire Watch.
- 4) Record of communication(s) to the Fire Department and monitoring company.
- 5) Record of other information as directed by the Local Fire Department personnel.

A Sample Fire Watch Log might look like:

Fire Watch Log	
SHADY GROVE NURSING HOME 1234 Main Street, ANYTOWN CO 01/13/2010	
<u>Time</u>	<u>Notes</u>
02:00	Sally Doe Started watch - performed patrol of facility - no problems found
02:15	Sally Doe performed patrol of facility - no problems found
02:30	John Smith Maintenance arrived – repaired system – system restored - Fire Watch terminated by administrator.

Termination of Fire Watch

It is the owners' responsibility to terminate the Fire Watch once the fire protection system has been fully restored or after the end of the special circumstance or event. Once the Fire Watch has been terminated, the owner or representative must notify the Division's Life Safety Code Manager at (303) 915-9687, notify the monitoring company, and notify the local Fire Department. A copy of completed Fire Watch log should be faxed to the attention of the Division's Life Safety Code Manager at (303) 753-6214.

Approved by: 

Title: Life Safety Code Mgr.

Date: 01/13/2010

Approved by: 

Title: Division Director

Date: 01/13/2010