

City of Raleigh, North Carolina
Office of the Fire Marshal



Fire Code Information Sheet

Fire Watch Requirements

Fire Watch Duties

The City of Raleigh Fire Marshal or designee may require a building owner to provide a fire watch if a fire protection system fails, if there are an excessive number of accidental activations or nuisance alarms, or a special circumstance or event. Personnel to conduct the fire watch are determined by the building owner.

Definition of Fire Watch

The assignment of a person or persons to an area for the express purpose of notifying the fire department and/or building occupants of an emergency, preventing a fire from occurring, extinguishing small fires, or protecting the public from fire or life safety dangers.

Requirements of the NC State Fire Prevention Code

Fire Alarm and/or Sprinkler System Shutdown

NFPA 101 – NCSFC Section 901.7- Where a required Fire Protection System is out of service, the fire department and the fire code official shall be notified immediately and, where required by the fire code official, the building shall either be evacuated or an approved fire watch shall be provided for all occupants left unprotected by the shutdown until the fire protection system has been returned to service. (More than 4 hours in a 24-hour period).

Owner Responsibilities

- a. Establish, instruct and maintain fire watch personnel.
- b. Notify the fire alarm monitoring company.
- c. Notify the local Fire Department and the Office of the Fire Marshal that the system is not working and again when the system is restored. (919) 996-6392 or fireprevention@raleighnc.gov
- d. Contact a licensed and qualified contractor to fix the fire protection system(s).
- e. If a Notice of Violation or Civil Citation has been issued, contact the designated Fire Marshal when the system has been repaired.

Personnel serving as a fire watch must have the following duties

- a. Conduct periodic patrols of the entire facility as specified.
- b. Identify any fire, life or property hazards.
- c. Notify the Fire Department if a fire is discovered by calling 911 with the exact address and type of emergency.
- d. Notify 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 evacuation of the building.

- 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. However, the Fire Department may designate other duties.

NOTE: The fire watch will not perform fire-fighting duties beyond the scope of the ordinary citizen.

Frequency of Inspections

Fire watch personnel should patrol the entire facility every 15 minutes in the following situations.

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

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 should show the following:

- 1. 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 fire department personnel.

Cancellation of Fire Watch

It is the owners' responsibility to cancel the fire watch once the fire protection system has been fully restored or after the end of the special circumstances or event.

Once the fire watch has been cancelled, the owner or representative must notify the monitoring company, and the Office of the Fire Marshal.

**Sample Fire Watch Log
The Raleigh Inn
Main Street, Raleigh, NC**

Time	Notes
0230	John Doe started watch – performed patrol, no problems found.
0245	John Doe performed patrol, no problems found.
0300	Greg Smith Technician arrived – repaired system, system restored – fire watch canceled by owner.