

## I. Definitions

- A. Fire Watch. The assignment of one or more people to an area to ensure continuous and systematic surveillance of a building or portion thereof, and for the express purpose of notifying the fire department and building occupants of an emergency, preventing a fire from occurring, extinguishing small fires, initiating a local alarm (if applicable), and protecting the public from fire or life safety dangers.

## II. Implementation

- A. A fire watch shall be performed for preplanned or emergency impairment of a fire detection and alarm system and/or a fire suppression system as outlined in this document. This includes but is not limited to construction, renovations, repairs, upgrades, system failures, etc.
  - 1. Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) will determine if a fire watch is required for unplanned or emergency impairments. EHS will notify the State Fire Marshal if an unplanned or emergency impairment of a fire detection and alarm system or a fire suppression system will last more than 8 hours. When reporting such an outage, include the following information:
    - a) Location of the system;
    - b) System(s) impacted and corresponding areas of coverage;
    - c) Anticipated duration of the outage;
    - d) Suspected reason for the outage if known; and
    - e) Name and contact information.
  - 2. The University Building Official will determine if a fire watch will be required for planned impairments and will notify the State Fire Marshal for longer duration impairments as outlined above.
- B. A fire watch shall be performed during hot work or demolition, renovation, or construction operations that involve torch cutting, welding, thermal welding, brazing, soldering, thermal spraying, thawing pipes, installation of torch-applied roof systems, producing sparks or any other similar activity. Hot Work Permits are to be issued by and shall be the sole responsibility of the contractor or supervisor (for Virginia Tech employees) overseeing the work being performed. A sample permit can be found at the end of this document.
- C. Impairment tags are to be placed at each fire department connection, system control valve, fire alarm control panel and fire alarm annunciator indicating which system, or part thereof, is out of service.

- III. Notifications –when a required fire and life safety system is out of service for an unplanned or emergency impairment, notify:
- A. Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) in the following order: Fire Safety Officer (540) 357-357-5985, Fire Safety Engineer (540) 357-0038, or Fire Prevention Engineer (267) 797-0723
  - B. Blacksburg Fire Department
  - C. State Fire Marshal
  - D. Insurance Carrier – Risk Management
  - E. Building Owner
    - 1. Construction and Renovation – Facilities or DSA
    - 2. Emergencies
      - a) Academic buildings – Facilities
      - b) Auxiliary buildings – Building Manager
      - c) Athletic buildings – Building Manager
  - F. Building occupants, by either coordinating notifications through Facilities or DSA and/or by posting signage at building entrances indicating the system that is impacted, the expected duration of the outage, and how to respond if an emergency occurs. See Appendix A for a sample form.
  - G. Office of Emergency Management – Emergencies only
  - H. Virginia Tech Police Department – Emergencies only

IV. Requirements

- A. At least one dedicated person is required to conduct patrols. Person(s) assigned to a fire watch shall not have any other responsibilities but to perform the fire watch. Additional personnel shall be added as necessary to meet the interval requirements or the scope of the outage. All personnel shall meet the following criteria:
  - 1. At least 18 years of age and speak English,
  - 2. Competent to identify fire hazards,
  - 3. Knowledgeable of the property's address and be capable of effectively communicating the need for a fire department response,
  - 4. Physically capable to perform patrols of all areas and self-preservation,
  - 5. Familiar with the structure and know how to activate the building fire alarm system (if operational); if such system is not operable, an alternate method to announce the alarm shall be available (horns, etc.),
  - 6. Trained in the use of fire extinguishers.
- B. Watch intervals. The structure or portions thereof shall be checked for fire hazards every 30 minutes or as required by EHS or the fire official.
- C. Communications devices. Fire watch personnel shall have a cellular phone or other means of communication acceptable to EHS or the fire official immediately available to initiate a fire department response. In the event of a fire, fire watch personnel shall alert occupants and take appropriate action.

D. A Fire watch log sheet is required to document the activities of the fire watch. The log shall list the following:

1. Building Name
2. Building Address
3. Name(s) of personnel conducting the fire watch
4. Date
5. Patrol times (start, intervals, and end)
6. Any circumstances prompting fire department notifications

E. Termination. Fire Watch shall continue until all of the following are met.

1. The initiating circumstances have been addressed or abated.
2. EHS and/or the fire code official has been notified and approved termination.
3. The fire department has been notified.

## V. Prohibited Operations

A. The use of open flames (candles, lanterns, gas powered heaters, portable open flame devices, or other open flame devices) shall be prohibited in areas where a sprinkler or fire alarm system is impaired.

B. The use of flame sources and the handling or dispensing of flammable or combustible liquids or pyrophoric materials shall be curtailed in research areas where a sprinkler or fire alarm system is impaired. EHS will either direct that signs be posted on doors within the affected area and/or will coordinate providing notice to occupants by other means.

C. Important Phone Numbers

1. Fire Code Official/Residence Halls – Barry Kincer (SFMO) 540-598-8076 or Joey Bona (SFMO) 540-524-0340
2. Blacksburg Fire Department – 911 (emergency) 540-961-1175 (non-emergency)
3. Virginia Tech Police – 911 (emergency) 540-231-6411 (non-emergency)
4. Virginia Tech Rescue - 911 (emergency) 540-231-6411 (non-emergency)
5. Office of Emergency Management – 540-231-2438
6. VT Repair (facilities) – 540-231-4300

**Appendix A: Fire Watch Checklist**

Fire Watch Checklist					
Building:		Date:			
Expected Duration System Outage (include days and/or hours):					
Means of Notifying Building Occupants (i.e. verbal command, whistle, horn):					
Fire Watch Personnel					
1st Watch Hours:	Name:	Phone Number:			
2nd Watch Hours:	Name:	Phone Number:			
3rd Watch Hours:	Name:	Phone Number:			
Area(s) That Require a Fire Watch					
Building:	Floor:	Area:			
	Floor:	Area:			
	Floor:	Area:			
	Floor:	Area:			
Fire Watch Patrol Log: <i>Patrol of affected areas must be conducted at least hourly</i>					
Time 1		Time 7		Time 13	
Time 2		Time 8		Time 14	
Time 3		Time 9		Time 15	
Time 4		Time 10		Time 16	
Time 5		Time 11		Time 17	
Time 6		Time 12		Time 18	
Comments					
Project Completion Date:			Signature:		

**Appendix B: Sample Fire Watch Checklist**

**HOT WORK PERMIT**

**BEFORE INITIATING HOT WORK, DETERMINE IF THE JOB CAN BE AVOIDED OR PERFORMED IN A SAFER WAY**

**This Hot Work Permit is required before any temporary operation involving open flames or that produces heat and/or sparks. This includes, but is not limited to: Brazing, Cutting, Grinding, Soldering, Torch Applied Roofing and Welding.**

<b>INSTRUCTIONS</b>	<b>REQUIRED PRECAUTIONS CHECKLIST</b>
<p><b>Project Supervisor:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has verified all precautions listed at the right have been implemented.</li> <li>Complete this form and post at the jobsite</li> <li>Assure all persons performing the work have been instructed on fire safety precautions related to the job.</li> <li>Assure the person(s) performing the fire watch are trained to use portable fire extinguishers and have at least one means of communication for calling 911.</li> <li>Assure fire watch personnel know how to activate fire protection systems (if available and operational) in order to release door holders, close smoke dampers, and shut down fans.</li> </ol>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Available sprinklers, hose streams and extinguishers are in service and operable</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Hot Work equipment is in good repair.</p> <p><b>Requirements within 35' of the work:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Flammable liquids, dusts, lint and oily deposits removed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Explosive atmospheres have been eliminated.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Floors are swept clean.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Combustible floors wet down or covered with damp sand or fire-resistive sheets.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Remove other combustibles where possible. Otherwise protect with fire-resistive tarpaulins or metal shields</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> All wall and floor openings are covered.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fire-resistive tarpaulins suspended beneath the work.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Protect or shut-down ducts and conveyors that might carry sparks to distant combustibles.</p> <p><b>Work on walls, ceilings or roof:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Construction is noncombustible and without combustible covering or insulation.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Combustibles on other side of walls, ceilings or roofs are moved away, protected or shielded.</p> <p><b>Work on enclosed equipment:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Enclosed equipment is cleaned of all combustibles.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Containers purged of flammable liquids/vapors and atmospheric testing indicates an explosion and fire hazard is not present.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pressurized vessels, piping and equipment removed from service, isolated and vented.</p> <p><b>Fire Watch/Hot Work Area Monitoring:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fire watch will be provided during and for 60 minutes after work, including during breaks.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fire watch is supplied with suitable extinguishers, and where practical, a charged small hose.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fire watch is trained in use of equipment and in sounding the alarm.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fire watch may be required in adjoining areas, above and below the work area.</p>
<p><b>HOT WORK BEING DONE BY:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Employee</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Contractor, Name:</p>	
<p>DATE</p>	
<p>JOB NUMBER</p>	
<p>LOCATION/BUILDING AND FLOOR</p>	
<p>NATURE OF JOB</p>	
<p>NAME OF PERSON DOING HOT WORK</p>	
<p>NAME OF PERSON ASSIGNED TO PERFORM FIRE WATCH</p>	
<p>I verify the above conditions have been examined, the precautions checked under the Required Precautions Checklist have been taken to prevent fire, and permission is authorized for this work.</p>	
<p>SIGNED (Fire Safety Supervisor or Operations Supervisor)</p>	
<p><b>IN CASE OF EMERGENCY:</b></p> <p><b>CALL 911</b></p> <p>PROVIDE THE POLICE DEPARTMENT THE LOCATION AND NATURE OF THE EMERGENCY</p>	