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FIRE OFFICIAL

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## FIRE WATCH GUIDELINES FOR BUSINESS AND CONTRACTORS HANDOUT

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this guideline is to assist business owners, building managers, general contractors and others with the proper establishment of a fire watch when required by the Fire Department.

### **SCOPE:**

This guideline shall be followed anytime a required fire alarm system, required fire sprinkler system, hot works permit or any other required fire protection system is out of service. This guideline shall also be followed if a fire watch is required by the Fire Department for any other reason.

Fire Watch is defined in the NJ Uniform Fire Code as: A temporary measure to ensure continuous and systematic surveillance of a building, or portion thereof, by one or more qualified individuals for the purposes of identifying and controlling fire hazards, detecting early signs of unwanted fire, raising an alarm of fire and notifying the fire department.

### **AUTHORITY:**

OUT OF SERVICE FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEM: Where a fire protection system is out of service or an excessive number of accidental activations, the fire department is authorized to require the building "impairment coordinator" (ex: maintenance personnel or owner/manager) to provide fire watch personnel until the system is diligently pursued for repair.

CONSTRUCTION, ALTERATION OR DEMOLITION OF A BUILDING: When alterations require modification of a portion of a fire protection system, the remainder of the system shall be kept in service and a fire watch shall be established at the deficient areas. When it is necessary to shut down the entire system, a fire watch shall be kept on site until the system is returned to service.

HOT WORK PERMIT: A fire watch shall be provided during hot work activities and shall continue for a minimum of 30 minutes after the conclusion of the work. The fire code official or the responsible manager under a hot work program, is authorized to extend the fire watch based on the hazards or work being performed. A fire watch is not required when the hot work area has no fire hazards or combustible exposures. Fire watch personnel shall have fire-extinguishing equipment readily available and shall be trained in the use of such equipment. Individuals assigned to fire watch duty shall be responsible for extinguishing spot fires and communicating an alarm.

ROOFING OPERATIONS: A fire watch shall be conducted for at least one hour after torches have been extinguished.

### **PROCEDURE:**

#### SPECIFIC DUTY REQUIREMENTS

1. Assigned personnel shall not be assigned to duties other than fire watch.
2. Assigned and adequate personnel shall patrol the area every 30 minutes where a required fire protection system is out of service or where required by the Fire Official due to a hazardous condition being conducted.
3. Assigned personnel shall maintain a log documenting fire watch activities.(enclosed)
4. Assigned personnel shall be able to notify occupants of the facility if the need to evacuate arises.
5. Assigned personnel shall be provided with communication equipment to notify 9-1-1 of a fire or emergency.
6. Assigned personnel shall have knowledge of the location and use of fire protection equipment. ex.fire extinguishers.
7. Assigned personnel shall contact the fire department when system is out of service for more than 4 hours in a 24 hour period and when the system is restored back in service. Contact may be by phone, e-mail or by fax numbers listed above.

NOTE: Random checks may be made by fire department personnel to insure all of the above provisions are being complied with.