



Northville Township Fire Department

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Updated March 29, 2016

Fire Protection System Impairment Procedure

Referenced Standards:

- 2009 International Fire Code as adopted by Chapter 79-2
- NFPA 101

Commentary:

There are periods of time in which fire protection systems including fire sprinklers, fire alarm, special protection system, kitchen hood systems and others may experience system impairments. The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidance on how to prepare for and plan for a system impairment. Fires that occur during a fire protection system impairment have a greater chance of causing major damage. Therefore, it is necessary to minimize the duration and scope of the impairment and to provide for alternate protection measures during the service or repair.

It is the responsibility of the building owner or designee to develop and implement an effective Fire Protection Impairment Procedure. Fire protection impairment procedures specific to your organization should be updated annually and include staff training, methods of monitoring and documentation, open communication between your staff, occupants, contractors, the fire department, and the insurance company.

Impairments fall into two categories: Planned or Unplanned. Following these procedures will help to keep the staff, residents, occupants, and visitors safe. Planned impairments should have all of the necessary preparations in place to minimize the downtime of the system. During impairments, all hazardous operations shall be discontinued until the systems are restored. The fire department must be immediately notified of any out-of-service fire protection systems. The building must be evacuated or an approved fire watch must be utilized during system impairments (**see Fire Watch Guidelines and Fire Watch Log**). Please keep in mind that a fire watch is not intended solely for the detection of fire but also for the prevention of fire by identifying and controlling fire hazards.

Standards:

- 901.7 Systems out of service.** 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 (see Fire Watch Guidelines) shall be provided for all occupants left unprotected by the shutdown until the fire protection system has been returned to service.
- 901.7.1 Impairment coordinator.** The building owner shall assign an impairment coordinator to comply with the requirements of this section. In the absence of a specific designee, the owner shall be considered the impairment coordinator.
- 901.7.2 Tag required.** A tag shall be used to indicate that a system, or portion thereof, has been removed from service.
- 901.7.3. Placement of tag.** The tag shall be posted at each fire department connection, system control valve, fire alarm control unit, fire alarm annunciator and fire command center, indicating which systems, or part thereof, has been removed from service. The fire code official shall specify where the tag is to be placed.

The Northville Township Fire Department requires a tag be placed on the Fire Department Connection and the Fire Alarm panel to indicate which system is out of service and the contact information for the service provider.

- **901.7.4 Preplanned impairment programs.** Preplanned impairments shall be authorized by the impairment coordinator. Before authorization is given, a designated individual shall be responsible for verifying that all the following procedures have been implemented:
 - 1) The extent and expected duration of the impairment have been determined.
 - 2) The areas or buildings involved have been inspected and increased risks determined.
 - 3) Recommendations have been submitted to management or building owner/manager.
 - 4) The fire department has been notified.
 - 5) The insurance carrier, the alarm company, building owner/manager, and other authorities having jurisdiction (State of Michigan, etc.) have been notified.
 - 6) Supervisors in the areas to be affected have been notified.
 - 7) A tag impairment system has been implemented.
 - 8) Necessary tools and materials have been assembled on the impairment site.

- **901.7.5 Emergency Impairment.** When unplanned impairments occur, appropriate emergency action shall be taken to minimize potential injury and damage. The impairment coordinator shall implement the steps outlined in section 901.7.4.

- **901.7.6 Restoring system to service.** When impaired equipment is restored to normal working order, the impairment coordinator shall verify that all of the following procedures have been implemented.
 - 1) Necessary inspections and tests have been conducted to verify that affected systems are operational.
 - 2) Supervisors have been advised that protection is restored.
 - 3) The fire department has been advised that protection is restored.
 - 4) The building owner/manager, insurance carrier, alarm company and other involved parties have been advised that protection is restored.
 - 5) The impairment tag has been removed.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact us directly at (248) 348-5807 or via email at thughes@twp.northville.mi.us.

Respectfully,



Thomas M. Hughes, Jr.
Fire Inspector