



Northville Township Fire Department

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Fire Watch Guidelines

Referenced Standards:

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

Commentary:

The following outlines the approved fire watch procedures as required by the Northville Township Fire Department. A fire watch may be permitted as an acceptable alternative to code requirements in order to allow for continued occupancy of a building for a specific, but limited period of time. This procedure was reviewed for compliance with the International Fire Code (IFC) 2009 edition, the Code of Ordinances for the Charter Township of Northville and current fire department standards. The intent of this document is to provide the residents, visitors and employees living and working within Northville Township with a procedure to protect their safety and well-being during a fire protection system impairment or other hazardous operation.

Standards:

A fire watch program is intended 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 (IFC 2009). In the event that any fire protection system is out-of-service, a fire watch must be implemented immediately. Fire watch must be provided continuously during this period and shall be the only duty of those assigned. This includes all levels of the building (basement, main floor and attic), concealed spaces and the exterior grounds. Personnel assigned to fire watch must:

- Have fire-extinguishing equipment, such as a portable fire extinguisher available
- Must be capable of using a portable fire extinguisher or other fire extinguishing equipment
- Must have the skills and abilities to perform the prescribed duties
- Must be capable of communicating with the 911 dispatch center to report an emergency
- Must be responsible for extinguishing spot fires and contacting 911
- Must be provided with at least one (1) approved means of notification to the fire department which may include telephone, cellular phones, radios or other approved method
- Must be capable of communication and notification of occupants and building staff by an approved method including: cell phones, radios, walkie-talkies, etc.
- Must be provided with a directory of names, telephone numbers and other required information to assist in making emergency calls
- Personnel must be trained and familiar with the following:
 - All buildings, occupancies and hazards involved
 - Facility fire protection system operations, capabilities and limitations including sprinklers, alarms, special suppression systems, fire doors, etc.
 - Use of portable extinguishing equipment
 - Facility specific fire response plan

While a building is under fire watch, fire watch personnel's sole duty shall be to perform constant patrols of the premises and keep watch for fires. Fire watch personnel must maintain a log that will remain on the premises

and must be made submitted to the fire department daily. This log must include the start and end time of every round and the initials of the employee (See Fire Watch Log).

- Rounds of all areas must be conducted no less than once per hour. Additional rounds may be required per the AHJ based on the hazard, etc.
- Personnel shall not leave their assigned area except during an emergency. In such cases, notification must be made.
- Personnel must become familiar with the site during the first round and should make sure the site is properly prepared by making sure that:
 - Windows and fire doors are closed
 - Oily rags, waste, paint, trash and other combustibles are removed from the building
 - All in-service fire protection equipment is in place and working properly
 - All exits are clear
 - Verify that no smoking on the premises
 - Heaters are used in accordance with their listing and approved prior to use
 - All sprinkler control valves are open and secured, either by electronic monitoring or via chain
 - Have a map of the facility to properly direct incoming emergency personnel

A copy of the fire watch log must be faxed daily to the Northville Township Fire Department at (248) 348-5840. Continued approval of the fire watch program is contingent on the above practices being followed to their fullest. Failure to comply with the requirements may result in immediate evacuation by the fire department. For extensive repairs and prolonged down time, additional requirements may be necessary up to and including evacuation or relocation of occupants.

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

Respectfully,



Thomas M. Hughes, Jr.
Fire Inspector

