



ANN ARBOR FIRE DEPARTMENT

Standard Operating Procedures

4.02 Fire Watch



FIRE WATCH

Effective: November 14, 2025
Scheduled Review: November 14, 2028
Approved: Fire Chief Mike Kennedy

I. PURPOSE

Provide process for the establishment of a fire watch, when required, to protect life, property, and to enhance the safety and well-being of building occupants. A fire watch is required for occupancies, which meet the following occupancy types, whose fire / life safety systems are impaired or out of service for reasons other than routine maintenance.

Occupancy Type	Description of Occupancy
A – Assembly	Where the posted occupancy load is 50 or greater
R – Residential	Hotels, apartments and congregate residence
I – Institutional	Nursing homes, hospitals, health care facilities providing care which render patients incapable of self-preservation without assistance, and jails
E – Educational	Schools through grade 12, preschools, and day care centers

Although it is not possible to cover all the potential uses for a fire watch, below are examples of the most encountered use of a fire watch:

- Temporary substitute for required fire protection that has become inoperable or not consistent with the level required for any reason until such system has been approved for service, e.g., shutting down a fire protection appliance for repair or maintenance.
- Temporary substitute for non-compliance or maintenance services due to change of the original approved system.

II. DEFINITIONS

Fire / Life Safety System: Approved devices, equipment, and systems or combination of systems used to detect fire, activate a fire alarm, extinguish or control a fire, control or manage smoke and products of a fire or any combustible thereof.

Fire Watch: A temporary measure intended to insure continuous and systematic surveillance of a building or portion thereof by one or more qualified individuals for the purpose of identifying and controlling fire hazards, detecting early signs of unwanted fire, notifying building occupants, and notifying the fire department.

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF FIRE WATCH

When AAFD is notified or identifies a fire / life safety system that is impaired or out of service for reasons other than routine maintenance, the following shall occur:

- A. Contact the responsible party and determine, if possible, the cause of the failure and if the system can be restored under normal circumstances.



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- B. If system(s) are rendered out of service, the ordering AAFD employee shall:
- Identify a responsible person to fulfill the duties of fire watch and verify identification via a formal piece of governmental or institutional issued identification
 - Ensure that a licensed fire protection company has been contacted.
 - Provide the responsible person the Fire Watch form (Complete online form)
 - Explain the procedure they are to follow and how to document their efforts on the fire department provided form as a legal document.

The fire marshal or on-call fire inspector can be contacted 24/7 for assistance with unique or challenging situations.

IV. APARTMENT BUILDINGS

If an apartment building's life safety system is impaired, the on-scene officer and / or EHP Fire Dispatch shall try to contact property maintenance or a property ownership representative.

If no contact can be made:

- Individual apartment tenants do not need to be issued a fire watch form.
- The building does not need to be evacuated if maintenance or property owner cannot be contacted.
- The department notification process for fire watch shall be followed.

V. FIRE WATCH PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS

Fire watch personnel shall:

- Be able to communicate effectively.
- Have a cell phone to call 9-1-1.
- Be thoroughly familiar with the area they are patrolling.
- Perform the fire watch without being assigned to other facility related activities or events.
- Patrol their designated area at least once each hour (24 hours a day).
- Make reports as instructed including suspicious persons on the site. A written record of patrol rounds and any significant information shall be recorded on the Fire Watch form or other document
- Relay any special orders or pertinent information to relief personnel.
- Remain on duty and awake until properly relieved.
- Alert building occupants of an emergency and direct evacuation when required.

VI. FOLLOW-UP

The fire officer in charge / completing report will complete the on-line fire watch form and email to the person who will be completing / responsible for the fire watch.



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The following city business day, the fire prevention bureau will follow up with the occupancy to ensure restoration of the system and / or ensure fire watch compliance. The fire watch shall continue until the FPB provides authorization to discontinue.