

Fire Watch Services

410.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a fire watch procedure in the event that automatic fire protection and/or detection services are inoperable or in the event of an excessive number of accidental activations.

410.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Accidental - The activation of any alarm that results in a response by the Department and that is caused by the negligence or intentional misuse of the system by a business owner or employees, staff or agents of the business; by mechanical failure, malfunction, improper installation, improper design, insufficient or inappropriate maintenance, improper placement or component over-sensitivity; any response in which department personnel are unable to gain access to the premises for any reason or are unable to determine the apparent cause of the alarm system failure; any other activation that is not caused by heat, smoke or fire, exclusive of an uncontrollable false alarm, as defined below.

Excessive - More than three accidental activations resulting in a response by the Department at the same premises in 12 calendar months.

Fire guard - A person who is properly trained and whose sole duty is to patrol the premises and watch for fire. This person should be equipped with an approved means of contacting the department in the event of a fire. Several fire guards might comprise a single fire watch.

Fire watch - A system of trained, on-site fire guards who notify the Palm Springs Fire Department and the occupants of a building if a fire occurs. Fire watch may be conducted by department personnel.

High life-risk occupancy - Hospitals, care facilities, schools, high-rise buildings and R-1 residential zones.

Non-controllable false alarm - An alarm is considered a non-controllable false alarm if the alarm system is activated due to malicious causes beyond the control of the owner.

410.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Palm Springs Fire Department that any time automatic fire protection or detection systems are inoperable, or in the event of an excessive number of accidental activations, the owner or the authorized designee of a property shall be required to immediately notify the Department.

The Fire Marshal or the authorized designee shall make a determination whether the location has a high life-risk occupancy, and if so, immediately implement a fire watch. If the location is not a high life-risk occupancy, the Fire Marshal or the authorized designee shall evaluate each set of

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unique circumstances and make a determination whether the property owner shall implement a fire watch.

This policy includes all buildings, whether new or existing, where an automatic fire protection and/or detection system is installed but not operable, including buildings undergoing alteration, repair and demolition.

410.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

- (a) The owner or the authorized designee shall immediately notify the Palm Springs Fire Department any time an automatic fire protection or detection system is not in operation or in the event of an excessive number of accidental activations.
- (b) Any repair or corrective action should be immediately initiated by the owner or the authorized designee. After repair or corrective action is completed and the system is back in service, the Palm Springs Fire Department and occupants should again be notified by the owner or the authorized designee.
- (c) A fire watch should be provided when the system cannot be repaired in a timely manner (more than 24 hours) and/or the lack of protection creates a building or life safety hazard as determined by the Fire Marshal or the authorized designee. Exception: A fire watch shall be established immediately when fire protection, detection, and alarm systems are not in operation in high, life-risk occupancies, such as hospitals, care facilities, schools, high-rise buildings and R-1 residential zones.
- (d) Building occupants must be notified within 24 hours of a fire watch being established.
- (e) The minimum level of fire watch service shall be one fire guard per floor in multi-story buildings and one fire guard for each fire protection system zone in a single story building. Additional fire guards may depend on the hazard and building design. The fire watch service will continue until the automatic fire protection or detection system is placed back in service. Fire guards shall be provided with at least one approved means of notifying the Department and their only duty shall be to perform constant patrols of the premises to watch for fires.
- (f) Fire guards shall remain on duty while places requiring a fire watch are open to the public, or when an activity requiring a fire watch is being conducted.
- (g) On-duty fire guards shall:
 - 1. Keep diligent watch for fires, obstructions to means of egress and other hazards
 - 2. Take prompt measures for remediation of hazards and extinguishment of fires that occur
 - 3. Take prompt measures to assist in the evacuation of the public from the structures