



Topeka Fire Department

Fire Watch Procedures

A fire watch is a short-term, emergency measure that is intended to provide an acceptable level of life safety in a building that has an impaired or out-of-service fire safety system. It is intended to allow continued occupancy of a building or facility that may not be protected during the time period required for implementing appropriate repairs to the system. The purpose of the fire watch is to check **ALL areas affected by the impairment on an hourly basis for fire/life safety emergencies and then to alert the occupants of the building and take appropriate actions as early as possible.** Each facility shall establish and maintain a written fire watch policy. **A fire watch is a compensatory measure only and cannot be used in lieu of compliance with the International Fire Code, Life Safety Code, or the Kansas Fire Prevention Code.**

IFC Definition - Fire Watch: A temporary measure 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 the building through concealed spaces.

When Required:

An **informal** fire watch shall be implemented **IMMEDIATELY** when conditions are discovered either by the facility or by other authorities. Examples of when an informal fire watch may be required by the Topeka Fire Department include:

- Outage or significant impairment of the fire alarm signaling system.
- Outage or significant impairment of the automatic fire suppression system.
- Outage or significant impairment of the facility water supply (where protected by fire a fire sprinkler system).
- Impairment of the building's exit system **NOT** significant enough to warrant evacuation and shutdown of the facility.

Informal Fire Watch Shall Include:

1. Notify ALL staff and occupants immediately.
2. A fire watch shall be maintained during the entire period of occupancy.
3. Assigned personnel **SHALL HAVE NO OTHER DUTIES**.
4. Fire watch includes notification and communication procedures. Portable radios and cellular phones may be used to send an alarm to occupants and to initiate emergency response personnel.
5. Informal fire watch shall be maintained during the entire period of facility occupancy.
6. All affected areas are to be checked at least hourly. *Special attention shall be paid to storage areas, janitor closets, attics, utility spaces, and other normally unoccupied areas.*

When is a Formal Fire Watch required? (This includes documented Fire Watch Log sheets and notification to The Topeka Fire Department Prevention Bureau)

If the above conditions are expected to exist for more than 8 hours(fire alarm), 10 hours (sprinkler system), or more than 4 hours in a 24 hour period for other fire protection/life systems, a FORMAL FIRE WATCH must be initiated.

- At the end of each day, the Fire Watch Log sheets are to be e-mailed to the Topeka Fire Department, Fire Prevention Division: fireinspectors@topeka.org or faxed to 785-368-0170.
- Once the impairment(s) is corrected and the system is restored to service, the Topeka Fire Department shall be contacted and advised that the protection is restored.

Additional Code References:

International Fire Code 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 be either evacuated or an approved fire watch shall be provided for all occupants left unprotected by the shutdown until the fire protection system has been returned to service.

Life Safety Code 9.6.1.5. Fire alarm system impairment procedures shall comply with NFPA 72, National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code.

- **NFPA 72 – 10.21.4.** The service provider shall report to the authority having jurisdiction any system that is out of service for more than 8 hours.

NFPA 25 (Standard for the Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems) – 15.5.2. A fire watch shall be implemented where a fire protection system is out of service for more than 10 hours in a 24-hour period.

(Complete the following section and e-mail fireinspectors@topeka.org or fax to 785-368-0170. Additional information can be found at <https://www.topeka.org/tfd/>. If you have additional questions, call 785-368-4000.)

Business/Building Name: _____

Address of Impairment: _____

Building Representative Name:

Print: _____

Signature: _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Topeka Fire Department Officer Name:

Print: _____

Signature: _____

Station/Apparatus: _____

Shift: _____

Company Level Fire Watch Steps (TFD USE ONLY): *The Topeka Fire Department Battalion Chiefs and/or Company Officers are authorized personnel who can provide the necessary fire watch paperwork to the business contact as well as explain the procedures for implementation.*

- Provide business/building owner/operator with the proper fire watch paperwork and explain the procedures.
- Contact dispatch with the business name and address along with what system will be placed out of service and that the business will be on fire watch until further notice.
- Make sure the incident report also contains the details as above.
- Send e-mails to the Fire Marshal and Fire Prevention Inspectors with the business name and address, along with all of the details so that a follow-up can be made.
- A follow-up with an inspector will be made to ensure that the system is repaired in compliance and back in service. The required fire watch paperwork will be collected by the inspector who will then notify dispatch and TFD personnel when the system is back in service.