

FIRE WATCH

A fire watch is a temporary measure taken when deemed necessary by the Fire Marshal. A fire watch may be required in the event that an automatic fire protection system is impaired or is out of service, when overcrowding is expected, the nature of the activities warrants it, or other necessary reasons. This service is intended to ensure continuous and systematic surveillance of a building or its protected portion(s) by one or more qualified individuals who are responsible for identifying and controlling fire hazards, maintaining means of egress, detecting early signs of fire, raising an alarm of fire, and notifying the fire department.

Owner/Management Responsibilities

The owner/manager is responsible for providing the required fire protection from hazards and to ensure the necessary protection is made ready and reliable.

Fire Watch Duties and Responsibilities

The primary function of a fire watch is to detect fire, notify occupants and the fire department, and evacuate the protected area or building. Firefighting activities are NOT the primary purpose of the fire watch.

Fire watch personnel are to remain on the property to assist the fire department with information and establishing contact with the owner/manager.

The duties of the fire watch are:

- Conduct periodic patrols of the protected area(s) or the entire facility, as appropriate.
- Identify any life, fire, or property hazards.
- Prevent obstruction of means of egress.
- Notify the Gwinnett County Department of Fire and Emergency Services when a fire is suspected or discovered.
- Use the emergency 911 number and provide the emergency operator with the exact address, type of emergency, and if applicable, advise that the fire protection system is impaired.
- Notify building occupants of the need to evacuate; if a building alarm system is functional, ensure it is activated to assist with the evacuation.
- Establish and maintain at least one means of direct communication with the Gwinnett County 911 Emergency Communication Center.
- Maintain a log of the fire watch tours and activities.
- Be knowledgeable in the location and use of fire protection equipment, including portable fire extinguishers.
- Fire watch personnel have the sole duty of providing a fire watch; other duties may be assigned by the Fire Marshal, as appropriate.

Frequency of Tours, Continuous Intervals

Fire watch personnel should patrol the entire protected area continuously when the following conditions exist:

1. Where the occupants are sleeping
2. Where occupants are incapable of self-preservation or require assistance
3. In occupancies where high numbers or concentrations of people are expected (i.e., places of assembly and educational occupancies)

Thirty Minute Intervals

Fire watch personnel should patrol high hazard areas of protected buildings every 30 minutes.

Sixty Minute Intervals

All other occupancies not meeting the requirements for continuous or 30 minute intervals will be patrolled by the fire watch on a 60 minute interval. All unoccupied protected buildings may be patrolled on a 60 minute interval.

Recordkeeping

A fire watch log shall be maintained at the protected facility and available to the Gwinnett County Department of Fire and Emergency Services at all times during the fire watch.

The fire watch log should contain the following information:

- Address of the facility/protected area.
- Name of person(s) on-duty conducting the fire watch.
- Date and time of fire watch duty.
- Beginning and ending times of each patrol.
- Name of fire watch member conducting a specific patrol.
- Record of communication(s) with the Fire Department and alarm monitoring company; including time(s) and nature of communication.
- Record of other information, as directed by Fire Department personnel.

Conclusion of Fire Watch Operations

The owner/manager is responsible for requesting conclusion of the fire watch, once the fire protection system has been restored and functional or the hazardous conditions no longer exists. Once fire watch has been concluded, with the permission of the Fire Marshal, the owner or their representative must notify the alarm monitoring company if applicable.

Codes and Standards

Gwinnett County Fire Prevention and Protection Ordinance (FPP 2012 Section 46-68; International Fire Code (IFC) (2006), Sections 202, 403.1, 901.7, 2604.2; NFPA 25 Standard for the Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems (2002) Section 14.5.2(3)(b); NFPA 601 Standard for Security Services in Fire Loss Prevention.

Fire Watch Checklist



- Perimeter security of property and buildings.
- Combustible (hazardous) waste removed from building.
- Unobstructed and operational fire protection equipment.
- Means of egress, aisles, and hallways clear.
- Monitoring of motors and machines not required to run continuously.
- Check for carelessly discarded smoking materials.
- Check all heating appliances/devices.
- Conditions of hazardous manufacturing processes that continue to operate.
- Storage of flammable and combustible liquids.
- All sprinkler valves should be opened, unless tagged out of service.
- Working operation of heating or air conditioning systems.
- Water and air valves checked for visible leaks.