

City of San Luis Obispo Fire Department
Division of Fire Prevention
2160 Santa Barbara Avenue
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
Phone: 805-781-7380

FIRE WATCH REQUIREMENTS (2013)

This information is provided to clarify the requirements of a fire watch. A fire watch is the action of an on-site person whose sole duty is to watch for the occurrence of a fire on the premises.

Fire Watch Requirements

If a fire protection system fails, is out of service due to lack of water, for maintenance or repairs, or if there are an excessive number of accidental activations or nuisance alarms, a building owner (or their representative) may be required by the Fire Department to provide a fire watch until the system is repaired. Personnel to conduct the fire watch are determined by the building owner. Note: A professional security company is not required. A fire watch is also required whenever fire-protection systems are in trouble or a supervisory mode for more than eight hours. A nuisance alarm is defined as any alarm caused by mechanical failure, malfunction, improper installation, lack of proper maintenance, or any alarm activated by a cause that cannot be determined, per NFPA 72.

Where Required

A fire watch is required in buildings with a fire sprinkler system, including hotels, motels, apartment buildings, bed and breakfasts, overnight hostels, public assembly buildings used for entertainment and/or nightclub activities (theatres, bars), residential care facilities, and schools (only when schools are not occupied/after hours).

Owner Responsibilities

- a) Establish, instruct and maintain fire-watch personnel.
- b) Notify the Central Station monitoring company.
- c) Notify the San Luis Obispo Fire Dispatch Center at 781-7312 when the system is not working and again when the system has been repaired and put back in service.
- d) Contact the fire sprinkler or fire alarm contractor to repair the fire-protection system(s).
- e) If a "Notice of Violation" has been issued, contact the Fire Department when the system has been repaired. Their phone number will be on the "Notice of Violation". The Fire Department may be reached during normal business hours at 805-781-7380.

Fire Watch Duties

Personnel serving as a fire watch have the following duties:

- a) Conduct periodic patrols of the entire facility as specified.
- b) Identify any fire, life or property hazards.
- c) Notify the Fire Department if a fire is discovered, by calling 9-1-1 with the exact address and specific type of emergency.
- d) Notify occupants of the facility to evacuate immediately. If the fire alarm tone or public address function of the alarm system is still functional, use them to assist with evacuation of the building.
- e) Determine at least one means of direct communication with the Fire Department. Both a land line telephone or a cell phone are acceptable.
- f) Maintain a log of fire watch activities.
- g) Have knowledge of the location and use of fire protection equipment, such as fire extinguishers.
- h) In A, R, I and E occupancies, fire watch personnel cannot have other duties besides their assigned fire watch. However, the Fire Department may designate other duties.

NOTE: The fire watch person will not perform firefighting duties beyond the scope of an ordinary citizen.

Frequency of Inspections

Fire watch personnel should patrol the entire facility every 15 minutes in the following situations:

- a) The facility has people sleeping.
- b) The facility is an institutional occupancy.
- c) The facility is an occupied assembly or educational occupancy.

Other occupied facilities that do not meet the requirements for a 15-minute patrol frequency should have a 30 minute patrol frequency.

Record Keeping

A fire watch log should be maintained at the facility. The log must be available to the Fire Department at all times during the fire watch.

The log should show the following:

- 1) Address of the facility.
- 2) Times that the patrol has completed each tour of the facility.
- 3) Name of the person conducting the fire watch.
- 4) Record of communication(s) to the Fire Department and sprinkler/alarm monitoring company.
- 5) Record of other information as directed by Fire Department personnel.

Cancellation of Fire Watch

It is the owner's responsibility to cancel the fire watch once the fire protection system has been fully restored. Once the fire watch has been cancelled, the owner or representative must notify the monitoring company and the San Luis Obispo Fire Dispatch Center at 805-781-7312.

For additional information about fire protection systems or testing of systems, contact the City of San Luis Obispo Fire Prevention Bureau at 805-781-7380.

References

- [] The 2010 California Fire Code Chapter 10 – Means of Egress
- [] The 2010 California Fire Code Chapter 14 – Fire Safety During Construction and Demolition
- [] 2010 NFPA 72 – National Fire Alarm Signaling Code

Sample Fire Log:

1234 Main Street, Any Town, USA

Time	Watch Person	Notes
0200	Sally Doe	Started watch
0230	Sally Doe	
0230	John Smith	Maintenance Arrived