

**VANDERBILT  UNIVERSITY**  
**MEDICAL CENTER**

**Policy:** Fire Watch Procedure for Fire Alarm or Fire Suppression System Impairment Activities

Category	Safety
Policy Number	SA 10-10.08
Approval Date	August 2016
Effective Date	August 2016
Supersedes	February 2014

**Applicable to**

Adult Enterprise                       Pediatric Enterprise                       Behavioral Health Enterprise

**Team Members Performing**

All faculty & staff     Faculty & staff providing direct patient care or contact     MD     House Staff     APRN/PA     RN     LPN  
 Other:

**Responsible Committee**

<input type="checkbox"/> Administrative Operations Committee	<input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacy, Therapeutics, and Diagnostics Committee
<input type="checkbox"/> Clinical Operations Committee	<input type="checkbox"/> Health Record Executive Committee
<input type="checkbox"/> Clinical Practice Committee	<input type="checkbox"/> Information Privacy and Security Executive Committee
<input type="checkbox"/> Quality Steering Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medical Center Safety Committee
<input type="checkbox"/> Infection Prevention Executive Committee	

**Content Experts**

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**I. Purpose:**

To define the guidelines for temporary fire protection by means of a system impairment fire watch inspection program. The primary goal of this program is to verify that the occupants are provided with early warning fire detection and notification during an emergency and that other life safety systems have not been impaired.

**II. Policy:**

A system impairment fire watch (hereafter referred to as fire watch) is initiated when there is significant impairment of the fire protection system in an occupied Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) entity classified as health care, ambulatory, or any occupancies adjacent to these areas (business entity), and a temporary alarm system or water-based fire protection system has not been provided.

A fire watch is required for VUMC entities classified as health care, ambulatory, or any occupancies adjacent to these areas. The construction safety subcommittee determines whether or not a fire watch is required in areas not covered above based upon patient acuity, relative hazard, and time of day/occupancy schedule.

For the purpose of this policy the fire protection system includes fire alarm system components, water-based suppression systems, dry powder suppression systems, gaseous suppression systems (i.e., FM-200), and the heliport suppression system.

### III. Specific Information:

#### A. Significant Impairment:

1. A significant impairment is defined as:
  - a. An unscheduled outage of the fire protection system for greater than 4 hours in a 24-hour period; or
  - b. A scheduled outage for greater than 4 hours in a 24-hour period, where the majority of the work will take place after the normal business hours of Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.
2. A significant impairment of the fire protection system is any of the following components out of service:
  - a. In a single smoke compartment:
    - i. 50% or more fire alarm pull stations;
    - ii. 50% or more smoke detectors;
    - iii. 50% or more flow switches;
    - iv. 50% or more visual or audible notification devices;
    - or
    - v. Fire suppression system (water, dry powder, and gaseous).
  - b. In multiple adjacent smoke compartments:

Any significant impairment of any fire protection system in multiple adjacent smoke compartments for greater than 4 hours in a 24-hour period, regardless of whether it is scheduled or unscheduled.
  - c. On the heliport:

An impairment of the heliport foam suppression system while a helicopter is on the pad.

- B. Impaired devices are tagged according to the Facilities Management Fire Alarm Tag Out policy. (See References.)
- C. For new buildings being built in phases, a system impairment fire watch is not required for impairments greater than 4 hours in the unoccupied areas if:
  - 1. The fire protection services in occupied areas of the building are not impaired for greater than 4 hours; and
  - 2. There is a minimum 2-hour fire-rated assembly between the occupied and unoccupied areas.
- D. These requirements are a minimum and a fire watch may be implemented for conditions not defined in this policy at the discretion of the Construction Safety Subcommittee.
- E. System Impairment Fire Watch Inspections:
  - 1. Notifications of Fire Watch Inspections are faxed or emailed to the departments listed on the Life Safety System Interruption Notice prior to the start of the watch. The notification includes the following information:
    - a. Date;
    - b. Duration;
    - c. Location;
    - d. Notice of Life Safety System Outage; and
    - e. Areas affected.
  - 2. A fire watch is performed by designated personnel appointed by the VUMC project supervisor. [Fire watch procedures](#) are described in an attachment to this policy.
  - 3. The individual performing the fire watch wears Vanderbilt-issued identification at all times.
  - 4. The individual performing the fire watch has ready access to fire extinguishers, checks egress routes in the watch area, and has the ability to notify Vanderbilt University Police Department (VUPD) at all times.
  - 5. The fire watch inspector documents their inspection activity on the [Fire Watch Log](#). The completed fire watch logs are maintained by the project supervisor in the project file for a minimum of 3 years.

F. Areas requiring System Impairment Fire Watch Inspections include the following:

1. Applicable Facilities Management projects; and
2. Applicable Space and Facilities projects.

**IV. Endorsement:**

Medical Center Safety Committee	June 2016
Executive Policy Committee	August 2016

**V. Approval:**

Marilyn Dubree, MSN, RN, NE-BC Executive Chief Nursing Officer	8/23/16
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C. Wright Pinson, MBA, MD Deputy Chief Executive Officer, VUMC Chief Executive Officer, Vanderbilt Health System Chairman, Vanderbilt Health Affiliated Network	8/23/16
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**VI. References:**

National Fire Protection Association. (2016). Retrieved from:

<http://www.nfpa.org>

NFPA 25 Standard for the Inspection, Testing, Maintenance of  
Water-Based Fire Protection Systems

NFPA 72 National Fire Alarm Code

The Joint Commission, Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Hospitals  
(CAMH). (2016). Retrieved via ESKIND Digital Library (search word  
“CAMH” then select “Accreditation Requirements”) from

<http://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/diglib/>  
*Life Safety Standard* LS.01.02.01, EP 1

VUMC Facilities Management Policy No. 47, Tag Out for Fire Alarm Devices.  
(2013). Contact Facilities Management for access to policy.

VUMC Space and Facilities Planning Policy, Construction/Vendor Identification  
and Orientation. Contact Space and Facilities Planning for access to  
policy.

## Appendix A: Fire Watch Procedures

- 1** The designated Fire Watch Inspector completes the Fire Watch Log each hour for the duration of their watch period AND signs-off on the log at the end of their shift/watch period.
- 2** A Fire Watch Inspector patrols the affected area once every hour for the duration of the system impairment.
- 3** If the system is impaired for consecutive days, the Fire Watch Inspector patrols the affected areas at least once every hour after construction activities have ceased for the day and continues the fire watch until construction begins the next day.
- 4** The Fire Watch Inspector checks and maintains egress in the affected area during their watch. They have ready access to a fire extinguisher and the ability to notify VUPD at all times.
- 5** The Fire Watch Inspector turns in their Fire Watch Log to the project supervisor at the end of their shift/watch period (or next business day).

**Appendix B: Fire Watch Log**

**Fire Watch Log**

*USE ONLY ONE LOG PER DAY, PER SHIFT*

Fire Watch Inspector \_\_\_\_\_ Day of Watch \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
 Fire Watch Location \_\_\_\_\_  
 Watch Start Time: \_\_:\_\_ Watch End Time: \_\_:\_\_

Hour #	Deficiency Noted? (Yes or No)	Deficiency Description / Corrective Actions
#1		
#2		
#3		
#4		
#5		
#6		
#7		
#8		
#9		
#10		
#11		
#12		

**Additional Notes:**

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**Fire Watch Inspector Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_