



# Standard Operating Procedures

Fire Prevention Services  
Office of Campus Safety

*The University of Texas at Austin*

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## **FIRE WATCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN**

The following provides the requirements for a fire watch at the University of Texas at Austin.

1. Where a required *fire alarm system* is out of service for a period of more than four (4) hours in a twenty-four (24) hour period, Fire Prevention Services (FPS) shall be notified, the building evacuated, or an approved fire watch shall be provided for all areas left unprotected by the outage/shutdown and shall continue until such time as the *fire alarm system* has been returned to service.
2. Where a required *water based fire protection system (sprinkler system)* is out of service for a period of more than ten (10) hours in a twenty-four (24) hour period, FPS shall be notified, the building shall be evacuated, or an approved fire watch shall be provided for all areas left unprotected by the outage/shutdown and shall continue until such time as the *sprinkler system* has been returned to service.
3. The fire watch shall be performed for the entire duration of the outage/shutdown. This shall include lunches, breaks and any lag time between the completion of the work and the restoration of the system to operation.

- a. All areas affected by the outage/shutdown shall be surveyed a minimum of one (1) time every thirty (30) minutes.
4. A single individual or multiple people may perform the fire watch. If all areas without fire alarm and/or sprinkler coverage are occupied with workers, the group may perform the fire watch. A minimum of one individual involved in the fire watch shall be provided as the primary contact and the fire watch shall involve some special action beyond normal staffing, such as assigning additional personnel to walk the areas affected by the outage/shutdown. Such individuals shall be specially trained in fire prevention and in the use of fire extinguishers, in notifying The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD), in activation of the building fire alarm, and in understanding the particular fire safety situation for public education purposes.
    - a. Where a group of workers are allowed to perform the fire watch, the entire group shall receive fire watch instructions and at least one person shall perform a survey of the entire area affected by the outage/shutdown every thirty (30) minutes and for a period of thirty (30) minutes after work is completed and the fire alarm and/or sprinkler systems are returned to service.
5. The following is the required minimum of the fire alarm and sprinkler system to perform a fire watch:
    - a. At what frequency the fire watch is to be performed?
      - i. Answer: Minimum of every thirty (30) minutes.
    - b. How long after work has been completed and the system(s) restored to normal operation is the fire watch required to be continued?
      - i. Answer: Thirty (30) minutes.
    - c. The person or persons responsible for the fire watch shall be required to demonstrate that they know the location of the sprinkler control valves and that they know how to charge the sprinkler system. Each person shall be responsible for explaining the location of the sprinkler control valves and the steps required to charge the sprinkler system.
    - d. The person or persons responsible for the fire watch shall be required to demonstrate that they know the location of all manual fire alarm pull stations within the area affected by the outage/shutdown and that they know how to activate the manual pull station. Each person shall be responsible for explaining the location of the applicable manual pull stations and the steps required to activate the fire alarm system.

- e. The person or persons responsible for the fire watch shall have the ability to contact UTPD via cellular phone in the event of a fire emergency.
6. All manual fire alarm pull stations in the fire watch area shall remain active for the duration of the fire watch.
7. Fire watch personnel shall be vigilant in watching for the presence of smoke or fire throughout the fire watch area. If smoke or fire is observed, the fire watch personnel shall perform the following tasks. (Note that all fire watch personnel shall be required to explain these procedures in sequence if quizzed by FPS staff.):
  - a. Sound the building fire alarm immediately by pulling a manual pull station.
  - b. Report the fire or other emergencies to UTPD via cell phone at (512) 471-4441.
    - i. Inform UTPD of the building, floor and nature of the emergency.
  - c. The fire watch personnel shall attempt to extinguish any fire only when the fire is obviously of a size within the capacity of the extinguishing resources available.
8. The fire watch personnel shall have available a minimum of one (1), 10LB – 4-A: 40B: C fire extinguisher on their person while performing the fire watch.
9. All covers that have been placed on sprinkler heads during the outage/shutdown shall be removed immediately upon completion of the work, if applicable.
10. All covers that have been placed on sprinkler heads during the outage/shutdown shall be removed immediately upon completion of the work, if applicable.
11. Fire watch personnel shall be permitted to perform additional tasks but those tasks shall not distract him/her from his/her fire watch responsibilities.
12. The fire watch shall be maintained for a minimum period of thirty (30) minutes after completion of cutting, welding, or other open flame operations to detect and extinguish any smoldering or flaming fires. During this time, the work area and other adjacent areas where sparks or flame may have traveled shall be searched for signs of combustion.
13. FPS inspectors shall periodically visit the jobsite and verify the fire watch. The persons(s) performing the fire watch shall respond to all FPS inspectors questions regarding the fire watch procedure.

14. If the responsible fire watch personnel fail to answer all questions correctly regarding the fire watch procedure, the project will be shut down immediately and the *fire alarm system* or *fire sprinkler system* shall be restored to operation without delay.