



FIRE DEPARTMENT – FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU

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Fire Prevention Standards
Impairment Rules/Fire Watch

July 8, 2010

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to guide owners or responsible parties when a fire protection system is not operational.

Impairment Rules:

Where any fire protection system is out of service, the Fire Department shall be notified immediately, the building shall either be evacuated or an approved fire watch shall be provided for all occupants left unprotected by the shut down until the fire protection system has been returned to service. Where utilized, fire watches shall be provided with at least one approved means for notification to the Fire Department and their only duty shall be to perform constant patrols of the protected premises and keep watch for fires.

Fire Watch Procedures:

1. Designated individual(s), with no other duties.
2. Must remain in unprotected area at all times.
3. Have knowledge of exit paths.
4. Have radio or phone on his or her person to contact 911 immediately in the event of a fire or other life threatening hazard. Cell phone should be programmed to San Rafael Fire Dispatch: (415) 453-1515.
5. Have ability to sound alarm to all occupants to alert them to leave the building in the event of an emergency.
6. Be on site at any time the unprotected area is occupied.
7. Have fire-extinguishing equipment readily available and shall be trained in its use.

Impairment Coordinator:

The building owner shall assign an impairment coordinator to comply with the requirements of this handout and the California Fire Code. In the absence of a specific designee, the owner shall be considered the impairment coordinator.

Notifying Fire Department Dispatch:

Prior to shutting off any fire protection or life safety system, notify the Fire Department by calling the San Rafael Fire Dispatch at: (415) 453-1515. Provide the following information:

1. Caller name, company, and cell phone number.
2. Name and address of building affected.
3. Nature of problem reported and type of system out of service. (fire alarm, sprinkler, etc.) This information shall include specific details on system locations or zones, if more than one location or zone is affected.

Tagging of Systems:

A tag shall be used to indicate that a system, or portion thereof, is impaired or out of service. Unless otherwise directed by the Fire Marshal, the tag shall be posted at the following locations:

<u>Life Safety System:</u>	<u>Location of Tag/Label:</u>
Emergency Generator	On Control Panel
Fire Alarm System	On Fire Alarm Panel
Fire Pumps	Fire Command Center
Range Hoods	On the Control Valve of Extinguisher or Cylinder
Smoke Control System	On Smoke Control System Panel
Fire Sprinkler System	On Fire Department Connection and Control Valve
Standpipe System	On Fire Department Connection and Control Valve
Haz-Mat Emergency Alarm System	In a readily viewable location

Preplanned Impairment Programs:

Preplanned impairments shall be authorized by the impairment coordinator. Before authorization is given, a designated individual shall be responsible for verifying that all of the following procedures have been implemented:

1. The extent and expected duration of the impairment have been determined.
2. The areas or buildings involved have been inspected and the increased risks determined.
3. Recommendations have been submitted to management or building owner/manager.
4. The San Rafael Fire Dispatch has been notified
5. The insurance carrier, the alarm company, building owner/manager, and other authorities having jurisdiction have been notified.
6. The supervisors in the areas to be affected have been notified.
7. A tag impairment system has been implemented.
8. Necessary tools and materials have been assembled on the impairment site.

Emergency Impairments:

When an unplanned impairment occurs, appropriate emergency action shall be taken to minimize potential injury and damage. The impairment coordinator shall then implement the same steps as outlined in the preplanned impairment section.

Restoring Systems to Service:

When an impaired system or equipment is restored to normal working order, the impairment coordinator shall verify that all of the following procedures have been implemented:

1. Necessary inspections and tests have been conducted to verify that affected systems are operational.
2. Supervisors have been advised that protection is restored.
3. The San Rafael Fire Dispatch has been advised that protection is restored.
4. The building owner/manager, insurance carrier, alarm company, and other involved parties have been advised that protection is restored.
5. The impairment tags have been removed and restoration of system documented with date, time, and responsible party maintain records of all impairments.

Where alterations to the existing fire protection system have been made, the fire protection system shall not be placed back into service until it has been inspected and approved by the Fire Prevention Bureau.

Removal of or Tampering With Equipment:

It is unlawful for any person to remove, tamper with or otherwise disturb any fire detection and alarm system, fire suppression system, fire hydrant, or other fire appliance required by the fire code except for the purpose of extinguishing fire, training purposes, recharging or making necessary repairs, or when approved by the Fire Department.

References:

San Rafael Municipal Code Chapter (SRMC) 4.08; 2007 California Fire Code (CFC) Section 901.7; National Fire Protection Association, NFPA 25 Chapter 14; and NFPA 72 Chapter 10.

Fire Department Fire Watch:

A Fire Department fire watch may be required by the Fire Chief, based upon a high fire hazard condition or operation, the San Rafael Fire Department shall provide the fire watch as directed by the Fire Chief. The cost for the Fire Department fire watch shall be paid by the property/business owner as specified in SRMC Master Fee Schedule 06.01.04.