



**COLORADO**

**Division of Fire  
Prevention & Control**

Department of Public Safety

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## **Fire Watch Requirements**

### ***What is Fire Watch?***

Fire Watch is a *temporary* measure used to ensure the fire safety of a facility or premises and the people therein during a situation which creates an increased risk of fire danger.

The term Fire Watch is also used to describe a dedicated person(s) whose sole responsibility is to look for fires and other hazards within a building, specific area, or premises.

### ***What is the purpose of Fire Watch?***

Fire Watch is intended to ensure continuous and systematic surveillance of a building, or portion thereof, by one or more qualified individuals for the purposes of identifying and controlling fire hazards, detecting early signs of unwanted fire, raising an alarm of fire and notifying the fire department, and evacuating the building.

### ***When is Fire Watch Required?***

For most facilities, Fire Watch is required by the International Fire Code, 2015 Edition, published by the International Code Council, and adopted by DFPC. Where the local Authority Having Jurisdiction has adopted their own fire code, the requirements of that fire code shall dictate when Fire Watch is required.

- Whenever the building's fire alarm system, or fire sprinkler system, will be out of service for four (4) hours or longer. (IFC 901.7)
- Whenever "hot work," such as welding or hot tar roof repairs, are going on anywhere on the premises (IFC 3504.2)
- During building demolition whenever the AHJ determines the operation is hazardous in nature (IFC 3305.5)
- When the fire code official determines it is essential for public safety in a place of assembly or congregation due to the number of people, the nature of the performance, exhibition, display, contest, or activity (IFC 403.12.1)

In Health Care Facilities, including Assisted Living Residences and Mental Health Facilities, Fire Watch is required by Life Safety code, 2012 edition, published by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and adopted by DFPC and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), whenever a Fire Alarm system will be out of service for four (4) hours or longer in a 24-hour period (LSC 9.6.1.6), or a Fire Sprinkler system is out of service for ten (10) or more hours (NFPA 25, 15.5.2).

### ***How long can Fire Watch remain in effect?***

Fire Watch is a *temporary* means to provide an extra level of safety, or to supplant a life safety system that is out of service. Fire Watch cannot be used to avoid installing a required life safety system. If a life safety system goes out of service, repairs must be made as soon as possible to bring it back into service.

In the event of Fire Watch for hot work, such as welding or roof repairs, the Fire Watch shall remain in effect for at least 30 minutes after the work has finished, due to possible smoldering embers.

### ***Who can be assigned to Fire Watch?***

Those assigned to Fire Watch should be familiar with the building or premises and have access to all areas to perform their patrol duties, be well-versed in all emergency evacuation procedures, safety plans, alarm activation procedures, and have training in the use of fire extinguishers and safety equipment.

Those assigned to Fire Watch shall have no other duties or responsibilities while performing Fire Watch. For example, an employee who normally performs cleaning duties in a school cannot perform cleaning duties while on Fire Watch; similarly, a security guard cannot perform crowd control at an event while assigned to Fire Watch. The sole responsibility of those assigned to Fire Watch is to look for fires.

***How do I request Fire Watch?***

Should Fire Watch become necessary, the facility manager or their designee, shall contact the local fire official (Fire Marshal); or if there is no local fire official, contact DFPC. For Health Care Facilities: the Administrator, or their designee, shall use the website <https://www.colorado.gov/dfpc> and go to “Quick Links” and complete the Fire Watch form located in the “LSC Fire Watch Policy and Notification” link.

The local fire official or DFPC will determine if Fire Watch is appropriate and issue guidance based upon the following criteria:

- Hazards present
- Occupancy type and occupant load
- Duration of the Fire Watch requested
- Training of the personnel assigned to Fire Watch
- Intent and plan to repair the life safety system that is out of service

If Fire Watch is implemented, the following shall be notified immediately:

- The fire alarm monitoring company, if applicable
- The responding fire department
- The building’s insurance carrier
- In health care facilities, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), and DFPC if not already contacted

***Is a Fire Watch log required?***

During a Fire Watch, a log shall be kept of the patrols made during the Fire Watch. This is an example of a Fire Watch log, each facility may produce their own logbook pages:

I certify (by my initials below) that I completed a tour of my entire assigned area at the following times:					
Time Tour Completed	Initials		Time Tour Completed	Initials	

In facilities that have sleeping rooms, such as Health Care Facilities, Fire Watch rounds shall occur every fifteen (15) minutes; in facilities that do not have sleeping rooms, Fire Watch rounds shall occur every thirty (30) minutes.

***What do I do when Fire Watch is complete?***

When a Fire Watch is complete, the facility manager or their designee will contact the same offices that were contacted when the Fire Watch started, and inform them that the Fire Watch is no longer in effect.

A Copy of the Fire Watch Log shall be sent electronically to DFPC at the following email address: [chuck.altvater@state.co.us](mailto:chuck.altvater@state.co.us), or Faxed to 303-239-4131.

For questions, or to request a Fire Watch, contact DFPC Fire & Life Safety Section at: 303-239-4100.