



9.1 Fire Protection System Impairment Program

500 W. Pennsylvania Ave. * Southern Pines, NC 28387 * Phone (910) 692-2720 * www.southernpines.net/fire

Purpose

To establish a reasonable level of safety for property protection and building occupants during times when fire protection systems, either partly or completely, are off-line for the purpose of alteration, repair, or construction. This would also apply to emergency impairments that occur due to an unexpected occurrence. Placing a portion of any fire protection system off line does not relieve building personnel of the responsibility of notifying the fire department upon discovery of any fire, smoke or any other potentially dangerous situation anywhere in the building. An impairment is defined as a shutdown (completely or in part) of any fire protection system.

General Requirements

All of the following requirements shall apply every time a fire protection system is out of service regardless of a planned or emergency impairment. The code official reserves the right to conduct unannounced visits and checks of all fire watches in place to ensure compliance. Failure to comply could result in immediate evacuation.

The fire watch staff may consist of anyone 18 years of age or older and any of the following:

- Must be a current employee at business conducting fire watch
- Have participated in the Southern Pines Fire Department Impairment / Fire Watch training program or any other fire safety related training within one year with current documentation on site. This documentation must include the names of every individual utilized in the fire watch program in order to be considered
- A security company or security officer who has participated in a form of fire safety training with documentation provided.
- Any Town of Southern Pines Firefighter.

Anytime a fire protection system is out of service for planned or emergency impairments, the following fire safety precautions shall be implemented along with the fire watch program:

- All construction work that includes the use of torches, welding, cutting, hot work, or any other work deemed hazardous by the code official shall be stopped.
- No open flames of any type shall be used for any reason.
- Prohibit all smoking (This can be achieved by the temporary placement of "No Smoking" signs at the main entrance(s) to all portions of the building and throughout)
- If hot work is essential to complete the repairs, it shall be discussed with the code official.

Fire Patrol Tours

All fire patrol tours being conducted by the fire watch staff shall comply with all of the following:

There shall be a minimum of one individual for every floor in a multi-story building and one individual for every 5,000 square feet of occupied space and/or fire zone. Fire patrol tours shall be conducted every 30 minutes. Fire patrol tours shall be conducted every 15 minutes in the following occupancies or areas:

- Institutional occupancies (i.e., hospitals, nursing homes, etc.)
- Residential occupancies or areas where people are sleeping (i.e., hotels, apartments, town-homes, etc.)

*****Fire Watch Staff's only duty shall be constant patrol of the premises for fire*****

A record or "Southern Pines Fire Department fire watch log" shall be maintained and shall indicate time of patrol, the last name of the fire watch staff conducting the tour, area(s) patrolled, hazards found, and any corrective actions taken. A copy of this documentation shall be submitted to the fire department upon the completion of the fire watch tours. Only the fire code official can terminate the fire watch once it has begun.

Specific Requirements:

The following are requirements as set forth in the North Carolina State Fire Code and shall be used as a guide in following fire watch procedures.

Systems Out of Service

Where a required fire protection system is out of service, the fire department and the code official shall be notified immediately and, where required by the code official, 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 has been returned to service

- In this case, "systems" means both fire sprinkler systems and fire alarm systems.
- Calling the Southern Pines Fire Department at 910-692-2720 and speaking with the on-duty staff officer will satisfy the requirement for notification of the fire department and code official.

Impairment Coordinator

The building owner shall assign an impairment coordinator to comply with the requirement of this section. In the absence of a specific designee, the owner shall be considered the impairment coordinator.

- Any building or premises that have a requirement for any fire protection system must have an impairment coordinator.
- Nothing should happen to any fire protection system that the impairment coordinator is not aware of.

The impairment coordinator shall be the person responsible for making all notifications.

Tag Required

A tag shall be used to indicate that a system, or portion thereof, has been removed from service. The tag shall be posted at each fire department connection, system control valve, fire alarm control unit, fire alarm annunciator and command center, indicating which system or part thereof, has been removed from service. The code official shall specify where the tag will be placed.

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.

- The extent and expected duration of the impairment have been determined.
- The areas and buildings involved have been inspected and the increased risks determined.
- Recommendations have been submitted to building owner/manager.
- Calling the Southern Pines Fire Department office at 910-692-2720. **Do not call 911 for impairment notification.**
- The insurance carrier, the alarm company, building owner/manager and authorities having jurisdiction have been notified
- The supervisors, employees, and affected occupants in the areas to be affected have been properly notified. In occupancies or areas where occupants may be sleeping such as apartments, condos, townhomes, etc., they shall be given a minimum of 48 hours notice of the repairs. Where repairs are occurring in a hotel, motel, extended stay facility, etc. flyers shall be placed on doors, phone messages shall be left on all in-room phones, and an information sheet shall be placed at the check in desk.
- A tag impairment system has been implemented. Southern Pines Fire Department tags must be used.
- Impairment Tags shall be placed on the main entrances to the affected building, Sprinkler control room, Main fire alarm control panel and the exterior main entrance doors to the affected building.
- Necessary tools and materials have been assembled on the impairment site.

For all preplanned impairments, the Southern Pines Fire Department Prevention office shall be notified a minimum of 1 week prior to any work beginning. The information required to be provided is outlined in the preplanned impairment program section. This information may be submitted by mail, fax (910-692-2706), or by dropping it off at the Southern Pines Fire Department Fire Prevention Office. Once this information is reviewed by the code official, the repairs, alterations, etc. will be approved or recommended for an alternative repair schedule.

Emergency Impairments

When unplanned impairments occur, appropriate emergency action shall be taken to minimize potential injury and damage. The impairment coordinator shall implement the steps outlined in the "preplanned impairment" section or a fire watch in accordance with section "systems out of service" shall be implemented. If the fire watch cannot be implemented and/or the impairment coordinator cannot be contacted, the fire official is authorized to order the building evacuated.

Restoring Systems To Service

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

- Necessary inspections and tests have been conducted to verify that affected systems are operational.
- Supervisors have been advised that protection is restored.
- The Southern Pines Fire Department Fire Prevention office has been advised that the fire protection system is restored with documentation being provided.
- The building owner/manager, insurance carrier, alarm company, and other involved parties have been advised that protection has been restored.
- The impairment tag has been removed.
- Once all repairs have been completed, the fire patrol tours shall remain in place until the fire code official has been contacted. Only the code official can terminate the fire watch.