



GENERAL ORDER

GENERAL ORDER 610.10

Standby and Fire Watch Personnel

OFFICE OF THE FIRE MARSHAL

Issue Date: October 12, 2005

Revision Date: January 26, 2018

1 APPLICABILITY

2 All personnel.

3 POLICY

4 Standby and Fire Watch Personnel (Fire Watch) is a short term, emergency measure to provide
5 an acceptable level of life safety in a building that has an impaired fire or life safety system
6 (sprinkler system, fire alarm system, annunciator panels, etc.), or there is a potential hazard
7 that affects the occupancy characteristics.

8
9 In accordance with Section 17.104(c)(26) of the Howard County Fire Prevention Code, which
10 codifies and amends Section 1.7.17 of the National Fire Protection Association 1: Fire Code, the
11 Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) shall have the authority to require a Fire Watch when a
12 potentially hazardous condition and/or a reduction in life safety features exist due to the type
13 of performance, display, exhibit, occupancy, contest or activity; an impairment to a fire
14 protection or life safety feature; or the number of persons present.

15
16 A Fire Watch shall be subject to the Fire Marshal’s orders at all times, be visibly identified as a
17 Fire Watch, and remain on duty during the times such places are open to the public, when such
18 activity is being conducted, or as required by the Fire Marshal.

19 DEFINITIONS

20 ➤ **Fire Watch** – A temporary compensatory measure where identified personnel will check
21 all areas of the building on a regular basis to detect fire/life safety emergencies and then
22 alert the occupants to take appropriate action as early as possible.

23
24 ➤ **Qualified Employees** – Employees with a functional knowledge of the building layout
25 and its systems. Employees must be able to operate valves, climb stairs, dial phones,
26 and speak calmly and clearly in stressful situations.

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31 PROCEDURES

32 **GENERAL:**

33 A Fire Watch is usually required to be implemented immediately when certain conditions are
34 discovered either by the facility themselves or by other authorities.

35
36 Different occupancies have different levels of risk determined by the vulnerability of the
37 occupants. It is not appropriate to treat all occupancies the same, therefore each situation shall
38 be evaluated individually.

39 40 **QUALIFIED EMPLOYEES:**

41 The owner, agent or lessee shall employ the number of qualified persons, required and
42 approved by the Fire Marshal, to be on duty. Existing Qualified Employees may be used;
43 however, they shall be relieved of all other duties.

44
45 Employees may also be required to operate a fire extinguisher. However, the evacuation and
46 occupants' safety are their primary responsibility.

47 48 **FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS:**

49 The Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services (Department) shall be notified
50 when a commercial fire safety system is out of service or on "Test Mode" for more than four (4)
51 hours.

52
53 The owner or occupants of the building shall notify the Howard County Public Safety Answering
54 Point (PSAP) at 410-313-2929 when a system is out of service. The PSAP shall then notify the
55 On-Call Fire Marshal (OCFM).

56
57 If field personnel discover a system out of service they shall have the PSAP contact the OCFM.

58
59 Information forwarded to the OCFM shall include the building address, name, a contact person
60 and telephone number, the building telephone number, the reason the system is out of service,
61 and the approximate time the system will be placed back in service.

62
63 Fire Watch requirements will be determined by the OCFM.

64 65 **LIFE SAFETY SYSTEMS:**

66 When a life safety system, means of egress, fire rated assembly, fire protection feature,
67 emergency lighting, emergency generator, and/or exit illumination has been compromised, the
68 Fire Marshal may require a Fire Watch. The requirements will be determined by the OFM.

69 70 **OTHER EVENTS:**

71 When the Fire Marshal determines that a potentially hazardous condition could exist because
72 of the specific occupancy, the type of performance, display, exhibit, contest, activity or number
73 of persons present, the Fire Marshal may require a Fire Watch.

74



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75 The number, duties, and qualifications will be determined by the Fire Marshal depending on the
76 occupancy characteristics.

- 77 • This may be in addition to the number of crowd managers that are required for
78 assembly occupancies.

79

80 PROCEDURES:

81 Depending on the hazard, the OCFM may require a Fire Watch to be instituted. The OCFM will
82 determine the requirements and relay the following to the building's Qualified Personnel:

- 83 • The Fire Watch shall be subject to the Fire Marshal's orders at all times, identified, and
84 remain on duty during the times required by the OFM.
- 85 • A minimum of one (1) person per 100,000 square feet of building space, or one (1)
86 person for every five (5) floors, is required to maintain the Fire Watch unless otherwise
87 approved by the Fire Marshal.
- 88 • The Fire Watch shall have communication capabilities with the PSAP and for occupant
89 notification.
- 90 • The Fire Watch must walk the entire building to check for fire, smoke, or emergencies,
91 and evacuate the building in case of an emergency.
- 92 • A log must be maintained on the premises with entries every hour. Entries shall include
93 area(s) checked, time checked and by whom. The log will be supplied by the OFM
94 (Attachment A).
- 95 • Persons assigned to Fire Watch shall be used exclusively for this purpose. They shall not
96 be assigned any other duties.

97

98 The building shall be posted with signs containing the following statement: "**A FIRE**
99 **PROTECTION or LIFE SAFETY FEATURE IS OUT OF SERVICE. IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, DIAL**
100 **911.**" This sign shall be placed at all entrances and manual pull stations if so equipped. The sign
101 will be supplied by the OFM (Attachment B).

102

103 Should smoke, fire or an emergency be observed, the following actions shall be taken by the
104 Fire Watch: call 911, alert the remaining occupants, if possible reactivate the impaired alarm
105 and/or sprinkler system, and evacuate the building.

106

107 COMPLETION:

108 When service has been restored, the owner or occupant shall notify the Communications
109 Center (410-313-2929) that the protection feature is back in service and request to discontinue
110 the Fire Watch.

111

112 The PSAP shall notify the OCFM.

113

114 A Fire Marshal will visit the building, confirm that corrective action to the system has been
115 completed and remove the building from the Fire Watch. The Fire Marshal will remove all logs
116 and place them in the building's street address file for future reference.

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119 REFERENCES

- 120 • Current Version – Howard County Fire Code

121 SUMMARY OF DOCUMENT CHANGES

- 122 Convert to new G.O. template
- 123 Revised title
- 124 General revisions, format changes, etc.

125 FORMS/ATTACHMENTS

- 126 • Attachment A: Fire Watch Log
- 127 • Attachment B: Fire Protection Feature Out of Service sign

128 APPROVED

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Attachment A



Office of the Fire Marshal Fire Watch Log

Building Name _____ Telephone Number _____

Address _____

Watch Instituted By: _____ Date _____

Time	Conducted By (Print Name)	Smoke or Fire Evident	Area (s) of Building Checked	Time of Next Check	Initial

Department of Fire & Rescue Services, Office of the Fire Marshal: 410-313-6040
 Howard County Communications (911 center): 410-313-2929 *(call when system is back in service)*
 Fax completed logs to: 410-313-6066



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Attachment B



A Fire Protection Feature is Out of Service

Type of System Out Of Service

In Case of a Fire Emergency, Dial 911

Your location is _____
Building Address

Building Manager/Contact Name and Phone Number

Fire Official

Date

For additional information contact the Howard County Department of Fire & Rescue, Office of the Fire Marshal at 410-313-6040 or after hours 410-313-2929