



**Stockton Fire Department • Fire Prevention Division**  
345 N. El Dorado Street, Stockton, CA 95202  
(209) 937-8271 • Fax (209) 937-8893  
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## **FIRE WATCH GUIDELINES**

*Note: This guideline is a summary of Stockton Fire Department clarifications of City and State Codes. Information contained herein applies to typical circumstances and may not address all situations.*

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

A Fire Watch is a temporary measure intended to ensure continuous and systematic surveillance of an activity, 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.

### **When do I need to have a Fire Watch?**

A Fire Watch is required under the California Fire Code (CFC) for below reasons:

- Where, in the opinion of the fire code official, it is essential for public safety in a place of assembly or any other place where people congregate, because of the number of persons, or the nature of the performance, exhibition, display, contest or activity, the owner, agent, or lessee shall provide one or more fire watch personnel, as required.
- Where a required fire protection system is out of service, the fire department and the fire code official shall be notified immediately and, where required by the fire code official, the building shall be either evacuated or an approved fire watch shall be provided for all occupants left unprotected by the shutdown until the fire protection system has been returned to service.
- Where required by the fire code official or the site safety plan established in accordance with Ch.33, a fire watch shall be provided for building demolition and for building construction.
- A fire watch shall be provided during hot work activities and shall continue for not less than 30 minutes after the conclusion of the work. The fire code official, or the responsible manager under a hot work program, is authorized to extend the fire watch based on the hazards or work being performed.
- Where, in the opinion of the fire code official, it is essential for public safety in a trade show or exhibition, the owner or owner's authorized agent shall provide one or more fire watch personnel.
- As required by the Fire Code Official whenever a hazardous condition is present.

### **Who is required to provide a Fire watch?**

The owner, agent or lessee of any building or activity whenever the above situations occur. The Stockton Fire Department may require you to provide a Fire Watch; however, it is not the responsibility of the Stockton Fire Department to provide personnel to conduct a Fire Watch, although in certain circumstances we may provide Fire Prevention Officers at a charge to you.

### **What is required by me as an owner, agent, or lessee?**

- You shall provide a Fire Watch during the entire time an activity that requires a fire watch is being conducted until all attendees have left the premises. The Fire Watch is required on a 24-hour basis whenever a fire protection system is out of service (unless the Fire Code Official approves otherwise).
- You shall provide Fire Watch personnel the area to be patrolled and complete access to all areas of the activity or building in which the Fire Watch is conducted.
- You shall provide a means of direct communication, such as a cell phone, to the Fire Watch personnel for them to contact 9-1-1 in the event of an emergency. When multiple Fire Watch personnel are required, two-way radios shall be provided to each person on Fire Watch to communicate with each other and a centrally located administrative staff member.
- You shall provide each Fire Watch personnel with a method of alerting building occupants and an evacuation procedure.
- Any hazardous operation, for example, cutting/welding or cooking shall stop when fire protection system is down.



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### **What is required for a fire watch?**

Personnel - Personnel determined by the building or activity owner, agent, or lessee to conduct the Fire Watch shall:

- Be a responsible adult at least 18 years of age,
- Be able to speak English clearly,
- Be able to move throughout the building or activity safely,
- Be thoroughly familiar with the building or activity they are patrolling.
- Fire watch personnel shall be familiar of all hazardous material locations and dangerous processes within the structure and site. Fire watch personnel shall be familiar with any pre-emergency plans and emergency plans that exist for the structure.
- Be capable of recognizing and responding to a fire emergency in an efficient and appropriate manner. A professional security company is not required; however, they may be utilized for the Fire Watch if they meet the above requirements.

### **What are the duties of Fire Watch personnel?**

Personnel serving as a fire watch have the following responsibilities:

- Conduct periodic patrols of the interior of the entire building as specified.
- During the rounds, fire watch personnel shall make a thorough inspection of the building or spaces assigned to him/her noting at a minimum the following:
  - Outside doors and windows are closed and locked; fire doors are closed and not chained or tampered with to prevent exiting the structure.
  - All fire apparatus such as extinguisher hose lines, etc., are in place and not obstructed.
  - Aisles and exit ways are clear and not obstructed.
  - Motors and machines not required to be running are shut off.
  - All offices, conference rooms, file rooms, shall be checked.
  - All gas and electric heaters or other heating equipment are checked regularly.
  - All hazardous processes or manufacturing processes are in safe condition.
  - Flammable and combustible materials are properly stored in containers or in storage areas.
  - Particular attention shall be given to any areas of new construction or alteration areas for fire.
  - Concealed spaces, basements, storage area, build-ups, penthouses, and similar areas shall be checked.
- Identify any fire, life, or property hazards.
- Have at least one means of direct communication with the Fire Department. One of the means of communication must be a cell phone.
- Immediately report all discovered fire hazards to owner, agent, or lessee for immediate correction.
- Maintain a log of fire watch activities including hazards found, when and to whom they were reported.

### **In the event of fire or odor of smoke:**

- Immediately notify the Stockton Fire Department Communication Center if a fire is discovered by calling 9-1-1 with the exact address and the extent of fire involvement.
- Notify the occupants of the facility of the need to evacuate. If the sirens or public address function of the alarm system are still functional, use them to assist with the evacuation of the building.
- Fire watch personnel cannot have other duties besides their assigned fire watch, unless directed by the Fire Department.

### **Frequency of Inspection:**

- Buildings or activities shall have a fire watch patrol every 60 minutes.
- Fire watch personnel shall patrol the entire building or activity every 30 minutes in the following situations:
  - The building or activity has people sleeping.
  - The building or activity is an institutional occupancy.



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- The building or activity is occupied assembly occupancy.

#### **Number of Fire Watch Personnel**

- One Fire Watch personnel shall be provided per each 100,000 square feet of gross floor area for general businesses, apartment complexes, events and similar structures or activities.
- One Fire Watch personnel shall be provided per each 500,000 square feet of gross floor area for open warehouses.
- One Fire Watch personnel shall be provided for each 100 units of residential occupancy (such as a care facility).
- These numbers may be modified by the Fire Code Official as deemed necessary.

#### **Record Keeping**

A fire watch log shall be maintained at the facility. The log must be available to the Stockton Fire Department at all times during the fire watch. Fire watch daily log shall be submitted to Fire Prevention Division. The log will show the following:

- The address of the facility.
- Times the patrol has commenced for each tour of the facility.
- Name of the person(s) conducting 1 hr. fire watch.
- Record of any communication(s) to the Fire Department and/or monitoring company.
- Record of any unsafe conditions.
- Record of any corrective actions taken to remedy any unsafe conditions.
- Record of other information as directed by the Fire Department.

#### **When may I cancel my Fire Watch?**

The owner, agent or lessee may cancel the Fire Watch once the activity requiring the Fire Watch has concluded and all attendees have left the premises, or fire alarm and/or the fire suppression systems has been fully restored.

Once the fire watch has been cancelled, the owner, agent or lessee must notify the monitoring company and the Stockton Fire Department, Fire Prevention Office during normal business hours. If repairs are completed after normal business hours, or on the weekend, notify the Fire Prevention Office the next business day.