



Fire Watch Requirements for Hot Work

In New York State, fire watch requirements are established to minimize the risk of fires when activities such as welding, cutting, grinding, and other operations that produce heat, sparks, or open flames are performed. Additionally, unplanned impairments of the fire alarm or protection system may necessitate the establishment of a Fire Watch. These requirements are based on New York State Fire Code, Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) standards, and other relevant regulations. Key elements of fire watch requirements for hot work in New York State include:

Situations Requiring the Establishment of Fire Watch

- Planned impairments such as maintenance, repairs, or construction.
- Unplanned impairments where a failure of any portion of a fire protection system has occurred.
- Hot Work such as welding, cutting, or soldering.
- Other such instances as determined by the Fire Code Official.

Designation of a Fire Watch

- A fire watch must be designated by the person in charge of any planned impairment (e.g. Hot Work). Additionally, Fire Watch will be established by a Physical Plant Supervisor in consultation with the Office of Environmental Health, Safety, & Emergency Management for any unplanned impairment.
- Fire Watch activities must be documented using the SUNY Potsdam Fire Watch Log.

Training and Qualification

- Fire watch personnel shall be trained in accordance with this document.
- At a minimum they must know:
 - How to notify building occupants in the event smoke or fire is discovered.
 - How to sound an alarm and how to notify emergency services in case of a fire.
 - At SUNY Potsdam all emergencies are reported to University Police by the following means:
 - On-campus Phones: Dial 2222 or 911
 - Cell Phones: Dial (315) 267-2222
 - The locations of portable fire extinguishers as well as how to operate extinguishers appropriate for the anticipated hazards present.



Fire Watch Requirements for Hot Work

- How to properly use any personal protective equipment (PPE) related to anticipated hazards.
- How to properly fill out the SUNY Potsdam Fire Watch Log.
- How to identify the different classes of fires and potential hazards associated with each.
- The building layout and be able to effectively assist with evacuations, if needed.

Duration of Fire Watch

- A fire watch must be maintained throughout the duration of the impairment.
- In the event of a planned impairment for Hot Work the fire watch must continue for a minimum of 30 minutes after the conclusion of the hot work to ensure that any smoldering materials or hidden fires do not flare up.
- In some situations, the fire watch may be required for up to 60 minutes or longer depending on the materials involved and the environment. Consult the Office of Environmental Health, Safety, & Emergency Management for more information by emailing safety@potsdam.edu

Unplanned Impairments of Fire Protection Systems

In cases where fire protection systems fail unexpectedly, such as during system malfunctions, a fire watch must be implemented until the system is restored to full operation.

- Coordination with Environmental Health, Safety, & Emergency Management & Physical Plant:
 - An unintentional impairment of the fire alarm system needs to be reported to University Police as soon as it is discovered. University Police will notify Physical Plant personnel immediately to determine the system status and to implement Fire Watch.
 - Unauthorized disabling of any fire alarm system is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.
 - This information will be entered into our impairment tracking system for the duration of the impairment and notice will be sent to all applicable parties.



Fire Watch Requirements for Hot Work

Planned Impairments of Fire Protection Systems

In some instances, an intentional impairment of the fire alarm system may be required. When performing hot work at the State University of New York at Potsdam, it is crucial to prevent the accidental activation of the fire alarm system. This can happen when heat, smoke, or sparks produced during hot work trigger the system's heat or smoke detectors. To ensure the safety of personnel and prevent unnecessary disruptions, follow these steps to properly disable the fire alarm system and its components:

- Coordination with Campus Safety & Physical Plant:
 - The Office of Environmental Health, Safety, & Emergency Management (EHS/EM) must approve any intentional disabling of the fire alarm system or its components (e.g. Hot Work).
 - Unauthorized disabling of any fire alarm system is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.
 - This information will be entered into our impairment tracking system for the duration of the impairment and notice will be sent to all applicable parties.
- Deactivate Affected Detectors:
 - The department or contractor performing the work will coordinate with Physical Plant to identify and temporarily disable specific fire alarm components in the hot work area, such as smoke or heat detectors, if necessary.
- System Reactivation:
 - Once work has been completed and the fire watch period has ended, contact Physical Plant to verify that it is safe to reactivate the fire alarm system. Under no circumstances should detectors or systems remain deactivated once the hot work is complete. Physical Plant will restore the system and confirm full functionality.
- Recordkeeping:
 - All fire alarm system disablements and reactivations must be logged, with details including the date, time, personnel involved, and areas affected. This log as well as any related Fire Watch logs will be maintained by the Office of Environmental Health, Safety, & Emergency Management for future reference.

Areas of Responsibility

Planned Impairments:



Fire Watch Requirements for Hot Work

- Fire watch personnel must be positioned to have a clear view of the work area, particularly any adjacent areas where sparks or heat may travel.
- They must patrol the work area continuously and focus on detecting and extinguishing any fires at their inception.
- Fire watch personnel are responsible for maintaining a clear path of egress in case of an emergency.
- They must keep a log of all activities on the SUNY Potsdam Fire Watch Log.

Unplanned Impairments:

- Fire Watch must patrol all impacted portions of a building on an hourly basis.
- Fire watch personnel are responsible for maintaining a clear path of egress in case of an emergency.
- They must keep a log of all activities on the SUNY Potsdam Fire Watch Log.

Availability of Firefighting Equipment

- Portable fire extinguishers, fire hoses, or other appropriate firefighting equipment must be immediately available to the fire watch.
- The equipment should be suited to the types of fires that may occur (e.g., Class A, B, C, or D fires).

Permitting and Documentation

- Hot work operations must typically be authorized through a hot work permit issued by a responsible person, such as a fire safety officer or site supervisor.
- The fire watch must be part of the permitting process, and all hot work should comply with both state and local regulations.

Hot Work in Hazardous Areas

- In environments where hazardous materials (such as flammable gases or vapors) are present, additional precautions are required, including continuous atmospheric monitoring and specialized fire watch procedures.

Multiple Fire Watch Personnel

- In large or complex work environments where one person cannot adequately observe the entire work area, multiple fire watch personnel may be required.



Fire Watch Requirements for Hot Work

- Each individual must be stationed in a manner that ensures the entire area at risk is covered.

Compliance with Local Ordinances

- While the State of New York provides overarching guidelines, local fire codes or ordinances may impose additional or more stringent fire watch requirements.

By adhering to these fire watch requirements, hot work operations can be conducted safely while minimizing fire risk in compliance with New York State Fire Code and OSHA standards.