

FIRE PANEL SHUTDOWN AND FIRE WATCH POLICY

Division: Finance & Management

Responsible Office: Environmental Health & Safety

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POLICY SUMMAR

This policy is intended to ensure that, should a fire alarm system be removed from service in a SUNY Buffalo State building, intentionally or unintentionally, proper procedures that meet the requirements of the New York State Fire code are followed and enforced.

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy applies to any and all instances of a fire system being out of service at SUNY Buffalo State or facilities managed by SUNY Buffalo State. This includes, but is not limited to, removing the system from service during periods of: construction; renovation; inspection; cleaning; event-specific campus activities; and unexpected shutdowns caused by a loss of power or problem with the campus NION system.

DEFINITIONS

Fire Alarm System - A system to provide indication and warning of emergency situations involving hazardous materials or situations.

Fire Watch - The act of patrolling a building for fire or emergency when a fire safety system or device(s) has been disabled or is not in working order. The person(s) performing the fire watch must walk throughout the building with the sole responsibility of watching for fire. This process must persist until the fire safety devices that were taken out of service are put back into service. The member(s) of the fire watch must have a means of communication to reach the University Police Department or other outside emergency personnel should a fire situation arise.

NION System - The inter-campus computer system that relays messages of alarm from each campus building to the University Police Department, City of Buffalo Fire Department, and Campus Services Office.

Occupied Building – For purposes of this policy, any building for which SUNY Buffalo State is responsible, with any number of people inside for a designated period of time.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Who should know this policy

- Any individual(s) charged with the responsibility of removing a fire alarm system from service
- Environmental Health & Safety Office Staff

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Any individual(s) charged with the responsibility of removing a fire alarm system from service must adhere to the following:

1. Provide reason for the removal of the fire alarm service, as well as a timeframe of how long the system will be out of service.
2. Identify a designated official who will serve as a fire watch while the fire alarm is out of service.
3. Notify the office of Campus Services when the fire alarm has been removed from and put back into service.
4. Comply with any further directions given by the Environmental Health & Safety Office in regards to maintaining proper fire safety measures while fire alarm is out of service.

Environmental Health & Safety Office

- The Environmental Health & Safety Office is responsible for: maintaining this policy; assuring all proper safety measures are in place while fire alarm is out of service; monitoring campus adherence to this policy; and reporting instances of non-compliance to appropriate officials and/or levels of management.
- The Environmental Health & Safety Office reserves the right to refuse any request for removal of fire alarm service if it is deemed unnecessary or the safety measures provided are inadequate.

APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all entities that will be involved or notified when a fire system is no longer in service. This includes, but is not limited to, representatives from: University Police Department; City of Buffalo Fire Department; Environmental Health & Safety Office; Campus Services; and any parties that may have been involved in shutting down the fire system.

RELATED PROCEDURES

1. Training

Whenever a fire system is not in service or is planned to be out of service, the following entities must be notified: University Police Department; Environmental Health & Safety Office; Campus Services Office; and the City of Buffalo Fire Department. Should a fire system be taken out of service unexpectedly, the same entities should be notified as soon as possible following the discovery of the problem with the fire system.

2. Planned Interruption of Service

If a fire alarm system in an occupied building is taken off-line, with the knowledge of the City of Buffalo Fire Department and the University Police Department, for inspection or construction/renovation purposes, a fire watch will not be required, so long as an individual is seated at the building's main fire alarm panel. This individual's sole responsibility is to monitor the panel and notify the University Police Department and/or the City of Buffalo Fire Department should an alarm come in that is unrelated to the work under way. This individual must have means to notify the occupants of the building if/when there is an emergency and they need to evacuate.

3. Fire Watch for an Occupied Building

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If an occupied building is partially or entirely without fire system coverage, a fire watch must be initiated and shall not cease until the functionality of the fire system is fully restored. The person(s) tasked with performing the fire watch are expected to patrol the area of the building that is lacking the proper fire system coverage. Said person(s) shall not be tasked with any other responsibility other than performing the fire watch. The person(s) must have available an immediate means of communication with University Police and/or the City of Buffalo Fire Department, should these parties need to be notified during an emergency. The number of persons needed to conduct the fire watch shall vary, based on the size of the building and size of the area lacking adequate fire coverage.

4. Fire Watch for an Unoccupied Building

If a building is unoccupied, a fire watch will not be required regardless of the status of the fire alarm system coverage.

5. Signage Requirements

Should work being conducted on a fire system require proactive fire control devices to be taken out of service, a label or sign should be placed over this device noting that it is out of service, and listing a number to call in case of emergency. These devices include, but are not limited to: fire alarm pull stations, halon or ansul suppression system activation stations and standpipe stations.

RELATED INFORMATION

Related Links:

[Zone Disable Policy for use of Cold Smoke Effects in Theaters](#)

CONTACT INFORMATION

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APPROVAL

Approved prior to 2016

REVISION HISTORY

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Brief description of edit: Adapted to standard template

Date of change: 04/30/2026

Brief description of edit: Adapted to ADA compliant template