

## **University Fire Protection/Detection Impairment and Fire Watch Policy**

Revised January 12, 2022

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to establish a university-wide process to review the interruption of fire protection/detection systems, planned or unplanned, to provide for the safety of building occupants. These procedures include measures to be taken to ensure that increased risks are minimized and the duration of the impairment is limited.

### **Scope:**

This policy applies to all Rutgers employees, contractors or vendors servicing university fire protection/detection systems, or performing unrelated activities that require the impairment of university fire protection/detection systems.

### **Policy:**

As required by the New Jersey Uniform Fire Code, it is the policy of Rutgers University to assign a fire protection impairment coordinator to review all fire protection system impairments and to provide for the safety of building occupants during system impairments.

### **Definitions:**

**Fire Protection/Detection System** – Approved devices, equipment and systems or combination of systems used to detect a fire, activate an alarm, extinguish or control a fire, control or manage smoke and the products of fire or any combination thereof.

**Fire Watch** - A temporary measure intended to ensure continuous and systematic surveillance of a 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. A person or persons designated to physically patrol the area where the fire protection/detection system is impaired. Fire watch personnel will be trained staff employed by University Public Safety, unless otherwise approved by the Chief of Emergency Services.

**Impairment Coordinator** – The unit designated by the building owner to comply with the requirements of the New Jersey Uniform Fire Code as they relate to fire protection/detection system impairment requests. (Note: University Policy 30.1.3 assigns Rutgers Emergency Services as the University Impairment Coordinator)

**Fire Protection System Testing** – Scheduled testing and/or maintenance performed by licensed/certified Fire Systems Bureau Staff or contracted Fire Protection Vendors.

**Emergency Impairment** - When a fire protection/detection system is out of service due to an unexpected occurrence, or other unscheduled occurrence.

**Planned Impairment** - When a fire protection/detection system is out of service due to work that has been planned in advance, such as renovations, cleaning, hot work or other dust producing operations.

**Fire Official** - The fire official or fire inspector certified by the Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs and appointed or designated to direct the enforcement of the code by the appointing authority of a local enforcing agency. (Note: The Chief of Rutgers Emergency Services is designated as the Fire Code Official by the NJ Division of Fire Safety for Rutgers properties)

**Procedure:**

1. Unplanned/Planned Fire Protection/Detection Impairment Review and Approval

a. Unplanned (Emergency) Impairment

- i. Upon determining a fire protection/detection system is impaired, the effected building shall be vacated or an approved fire watch shall be implemented in accordance with this policy.
- ii. Immediate notification to Rutgers Emergency Services (Fire Systems Bureau, Fire Safety Bureau and Fire Official) to notify and review the system impairment conditions. Contact can be made through the Public Safety Communications Center 24/7:
  1. New Brunswick/Piscataway Campus, including RBHS: (732-932-7211)
  2. Newark Campus (973-353-5111) including RBHS (973-972-4491)
  3. Camden Campus (856-225-6111)
  4. Outlying and Field Stations (732-932-7211)
- iii. The unplanned impairment must be submitted through the University Fire Protection Impairment Database (<https://halflife.rutgers.edu/hotwork>) as soon as practical following the notification to Emergency Services.

b. Planned Impairment

- i. Planned fire protection/detection system impairments for Hot Work or services not listed in 2 below must be reviewed and approved by the University Impairment Coordinator and Fire Code Official. The impairment request must be submitted through the University Fire Protection Impairment Database (<https://halflife.rutgers.edu/hotwork>) a minimum of two (2) business days prior to the impairment date.

2. Inspection, testing or maintenance actively performed by the Rutgers Fire Systems Bureau, the Technician shall notify the Rutgers Public Safety Communications Center of all services performed. The Rutgers Public Safety Communications Center shall document the start and end times of the testing in the Computer Aided Dispatching system. The Technician performing the inspection, testing or maintenance services shall ensure the system is monitored and any signals not originated by the work they are performing shall result in a proper building system activation and notification of appropriate emergency responders. Approved impairment signage shall be posted at the main fire alarm control panel, annunciator panels and a sign posted in the main lobby indicating testing or maintenance is being performed.
3. Performing an Approved Fire Protection/Detection System Impairment
  - a. Fire Protection/Detection System Impairments will only be performed by trained staff. The appropriate trained staff shall perform the required pre-inspection to verify all of the impairment conditions established by the Impairment Coordinator and the Fire Official are met.
  - b. The trained staff will perform the following:
    - i. Impair only the minimum portions of the fire protection/detection system necessary for the work being performed.
    - ii. Impairments will only be performed if the contractor/vendor is on site and has the necessary tools and materials assembled and present to perform the work required for the impairment.
    - iii. If the impairment is being performed for work by a Fire Protection Contractor, the trained staff will oversee the contractor as they impair the fire protection/detection system, ensuring all conditions are met.
    - iv. An impairment tag shall be placed to indicate that the system, or portion thereof, has been removed from service. The tag shall be posted at each fire department connection (sprinkler impairment only), each system control valve impaired (FM Red Tag Impairment), fire alarm control panel, fire alarm annunciator, fire command center and shall notify the Public Safety Communications Center regarding the impairment. Appropriate notification shall be made to the Insurance Carrier for all fire sprinkler impairments.
    - v. Upon impairing a fire protection/detection system, the on-line impairment system shall be updated to document the time of the impairment, system or portions of the system impaired and other relevant information deemed appropriate by the trained staff.

- c. For limited impairments (ex: immediate area the work requiring the impairment is occurring), and as approved by Emergency Services, the personnel performing the work requiring a limited impairment will serve as the fire verification for the space impaired. Once a system is impaired, the individual performing the work required for the impairment must remain on scene at all times until the system is restored and inspected by the Trained Staff. A competent individual must remain on site during all breaks and lunch periods while the system is impaired.
- 4. When work is complete and the impaired fire protection/detection systems are ready to be restored to normal working order, a trained staff member shall meet the contractor to restore the system to service, or to assist the certified contractor in restoring the impaired system.
  - a. The trained staff member shall verify that the necessary inspections and tests have been conducted to verify that effected systems are operational. The requestor of the impairment has notified all supervisors in the area affected of the restoration. The Public Safety Communications Center, or approved monitoring station has been advised of the restoration. Notify the Insurance carrier of the restoration if applicable. All impairment tags have been removed.
- 5. Implementing/Cancelling a Fire Watch
  - a. Implementing a Fire Watch
    - i. On Campus Locations - Upon determining the need for a fire watch, University Public Safety shall provide the required number of Public Safety Staff to adequately perform the fire watch duties in the affected building. Emergency Services will review all fire watch requests or impairments and determine the adequate number of staff required to perform the fire watch.
      - 1. Pre-Planned requests for a fire watch shall be coordinated by the requestor directly with Public Safety-Security Division, following review and approval by Emergency Services, with sufficient time to review the request (not less than 48 hours notice).
      - 2. Emergency impairments will be reviewed and approved by Emergency Services and staffed by the appropriate Public Safety staff. If sufficient Public Safety staff is unavailable, the building must be vacated until an approved fire watch can be implemented.
    - ii. Off Campus Locations - Upon determining the need for a fire watch, the off campus facility management shall designate the required number of trained Staff to adequately perform the fire watch duties in the affected

building. The off campus facility management must immediately contact Emergency Services to review all fire watch requests or impairments and determine the adequate number of staff required to perform the fire watch.

b. Cancellation of a Fire Watch

- i. A Fire Watch will only be cancelled upon review and approval of Rutgers Emergency Services following review of the proper system restoration documentation and/or testing reports.
- ii. Upon approval to cancel the fire watch, Public Safety Central Communications shall note the cancellation approval authority in the CAD system and close the CAD.

6. Fire Watch Duties.

a. The fire watch shall be responsible for:

- i. The only duty shall be to perform constant patrols of the protected premises and keep watch for smoke or fire. Fire Watch personnel must remain within the structure or area impaired at all times while the fire watch is in place.
- ii. Shall be provided with at least one approved means for immediate notification of the fire department in the event smoke or fire is discovered. Approved notification shall be through the Public Safety radio system or cellular communications directly to Public Safety Central Communications.
- iii. Contact Public Safety Central Communications at least once per hour to report the complete building tour was performed and conditions found. Central Communications will make the appropriate CAD incident update to reflect the hourly tour report and the name of the personnel performing the fire watch.
- iv. Shall ensure that required fire doors are maintained in the closed position to limit the spread of smoke or fire.

b. In the event that smoke or fire is discovered, the fire watch shall immediately:

- i. Notify the Public Safety Central Communications Center of the conditions and request a fire department response.
- ii. Activate the fire alarm system

1. If the fire watch is implemented due to the impairment of the fire alarm system, the fire watch shall be equipped with appropriate notification devices (bull horn, air horns etc) to alert the occupants of an evacuation need.
  - iii. Assist in the orderly evacuation of building occupants.
  - iv. Utilize appropriate fire suppression equipment to suppress incipient stage fires.
- c. The fire watch personnel shall be trained annually in the duties of a Fire Watch personnel.
- v. Fire Watch training shall be provided annually. Training shall be approved by the Fire Code Official and shall include, but not limited to, proper selection and use of fire extinguishers, basic fire behavior, and basic fire safety and evacuation procedures.

# **SAMPLE SIGNAGE**

The following 4 pages are sample signs to be posted for Impairments or Testing as appropriate

# **FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEM**

## **TESTING IN PROGRESS**

**IF AN EMERGENCY IS OBSERVED**

**CALL 9-1-1**

**OR**

**732-932-7211**

**The fire alarm panel may indicate trouble, supervisory or active alarms during the testing.**

**Questions or concerns can be directed to Rutgers Emergency Services  
848-932-4800 or [es@rutgers.edu](mailto:es@rutgers.edu)**



**FIRE ALARM SYSTEM**

**TESTING IN PROGRESS**

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# IMPAIRMENT

## FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEM

	<b>Full System Impairment</b>
	<b>Partial System Impairment</b>
Description of Impairment:	

<b>CAD #:</b>	
<b>Impairment #:</b>	

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