



**CITY OF RICHMOND**  
**DEPARTMENT OF FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES**  
**FIRE PREVENTION DIVISION**  
**1904 N. HAMILTON STREET**  
**RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23230-4102**  
**Phone: (804) 646-6640 Fax: (804) 646-7465**  
**<https://www.rva.gov/fire-emergency-services/prevention>**



The Fire Marshal's Office must be notified regarding the extent and expected duration of the fire detection or protection system impairment. The Fire Marshal's Office (804) 646-6640 and the Department of Emergency Communications (804) 646-5106 must be notified of any fire alarm or sprinkler system service interruptions. If authorized by the Fire Marshal's Office, a Fire Watch may be temporarily used while a fire detection or Protection System is out of service for repairs or alterations. The following are the minimum requirements for a Fire Watch, along with the Requirements, Roles and Responsibilities of a Fire Watch Designee.

## **Fire Watch Requirements**

- A Fire Watch sign(s) must be posted on each floor of a building at each common entry points.
- All occupants or residents of a building must be notified that a Fire Watch is being conducted by mail, email, text alert, or individual print notification.
- A Fire Watch shall not be discontinued without approval from the Fire Marshal's Office.
  - If Fire Watch is being maintained due to a required fire alarm, detection, or suppression system being out of service, the Fire Watch must be maintained 24 hours a day until the system is placed back into service.
- In places of assembly, an individual Fire Watch Designee must be posted in each separate room that is capable of being occupied by 49 or more people.
- The responsible party must utilize and retain the approved RFD Fire Watch Log of all patrols and shift activities throughout the duration of their Fire Watch.  
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- When the system is repaired by a trained fire protection technician as approved by the fire code official, a copy of the work order detailing what repairs were made, and that the system is now operational, shall immediately be sent to the Fire Marshal's Office by email at  
[re-cal-prevention@rva.gov](mailto:re-cal-prevention@rva.gov).

- When any fire protection system is taken out of service, it must be clearly identified with a visible tag. The tag shall be posted at each fire department connection, system control valve, fire alarm control unit, fire alarm annunciator, and the fire command center, indicating which system or parts thereof have been removed from service. The tag(s) must remain visible until the full protection system is restored.

## **Requirements of the Fire Watch Designee**

The Fire Watch designee must:

- Be a minimum age of 18 years old.
- Have access to telephone equipment that can contact the 9-1-1 call center

- Have a working knowledge of the fire alarm and its components, as well as the ability to communicate a fire alarm and effectively order an evacuation of the building.
- Be familiar with the premises and evacuation procedures for the building.
- Have access to an approved portable fire extinguisher.
- Have approved training with portable fire extinguishing equipment.
  - If special firefighting equipment is provided in the building, the Fire Watch Designee shall have approved training in the use of the equipment (i.e., hose stations, extinguisher, etc.)
- Not have any other responsibilities other than being on Fire Watch.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of the Fire Watch Designee**

The Fire Watch designee must:

- Conduct a complete walk-through of the entire building per the designated time frame.
- Always remain awake and alert.
- Listen for alarms sounding in the building.
- Prevent fires by identifying and controlling fire hazards.
- Look for obvious signs of smoke or fire.
- Walk all common areas of the building, including all stairwells, basements, lounges, laundry rooms, and dining areas.
- If the designee encounters smoke or fire during patrol of the building:
  - Call 911 to activate the Fire Department.
  - Alert all occupants of the emergency.
  - Use the fire alarm system to alert occupants if the system is active.
  - If alarm systems are not working, have access to an alternate alerting system to notify all occupants of an emergency and the need to evacuate.
  - Pull the nearest fire alarm pull station (if available), exit the building.

Additional requirements may be issued by the Fire Marshal's Office as needed. If you have any questions about any watch requirements, please contact the Fire Marshal's Office at (804) 646-6640.