



Fire Watch

This information is provided to clarify the requirements for a fire watch. A fire watch is the action of an on-site person whose sole duty is to watch for the occurrence of fire.

Fire Watch Requirements

If a fire protection system fails, or there are an excessive number of accidental activations or nuisance alarms, a building owner (or their representative) may be required by the Fire Department to provide a fire watch until the system is repaired. Personnel to conduct the fire watch are determined by the building owner.

Note: A professional security company is not required.

A fire watch is also required whenever fire protection systems are in a trouble or a supervisory mode for more than eight hours. A nuisance alarm is defined as "an alarm caused by mechanical failure, malfunction, improper installation, or lack of proper maintenance, or an alarm activated by a cause that cannot be determined." (2019 CFC Chapter 2)

Owner Responsibilities

- a) Establish, instruct, and maintain fire watch personnel.
- b) Notify the monitoring company.
- c) Notify the Santa Maria Fire Prevention Bureau that the system is not working and again when the system has been repaired.
- d) Contact the repair company to fix the fire protection system(s).

Fire Watch Duties

Personnel serving as a fire watch have the following duties:

- a) Conduct periodic patrols of the entire facility as specified.
- b) Identify any fire, life, or property hazards.

Fire Watch Duties Continued

- c) Notify the Santa Maria Combined Communications Center if a fire is discovered by calling 9-1-1 with the exact address and type of emergency.
- d) Notify 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 evacuation of the building.
- e) Determine at least one means of direct communication with the Fire Department. A telephone is acceptable.
- f) Maintain a log of fire watch activities.
- g) Have knowledge of the location and use of fire protection equipment, such as fire extinguishers.
- h) In A, R, I and E occupancies, fire watch personnel cannot have other duties besides their assigned fire watch. However, the Fire Department may designate other duties.

Note: The fire watch will not perform fire-fighting duties beyond the scope of the ordinary citizen.

Frequency of Inspections

Fire watch personnel should patrol the entire facility every 15 minutes in the following situations:

- a) The facility has people sleeping.
- b) The facility is an institutional occupancy.
- c) The facility is an occupied assembly or educational occupancy.

Occupied facilities that do not meet the requirements for a 15-minute patrol frequency should have a fire watch patrol every 30 minutes.

(over)

Record Keeping

A fire watch log should be maintained at the facility. The log shall be always available to the Santa Maria Fire Department during the fire watch.

The log should include the following:

- 1) Address of the facility.
- 2) Times that the patrol has completed each tour of the facility.
- 3) Name of the person conducting the fire watch.
- 4) Record of communication(s) to the Fire Department and monitoring company.
- 5) Record of other information as directed by Fire Department personnel.

Cancellation of Fire Watch

It is the owners' responsibility to cancel the fire watch once the fire protection system has been fully restored. Once the fire watch has been cancelled, the owner or representative shall notify the monitoring company and the Fire Prevention Bureau. The Fire Prevention Bureau can be reached during normal business hours at 805-925-0951 Ext 2255.

For additional information about fire protection systems or testing of systems, please contact the Fire Prevention Bureau.

References

- The 2019 California Fire Code Chapter 3304.5 — *Fire Safety During Construction Alteration or Demolition of Buildings*.
- 2019 NFPA 72
- The City of Santa Maria Municipal Code Title 9. These can also be downloaded at: <http://www.cityofsantamaria.org>

Sample Fire Log

1234 E. Main Street

Time	Watch Person	Notes
0200	Sally Doe	Started watch
0230	Sally Doe	
0230	John Smith	Maintenance arrived