FABS
Fire and Building Safety

Fire & Building Safety
University of California, Merced
5200 N. Lake Rd.
Merced, CA 95348

Fire & Building Safety Guideline

SUBJECT: Fire Watch Guideline

PURPOSE: *Guidelines are established to facilitate compliance with applicable codes, standards, and regulations. Information contained herein applies to typical circumstances and may not address all situations.*

Guideline No. 007

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Pages 1-3

Scope:

In the event of a failure of the fire/life safety systems for any building owned, leased or operated by UC Merced a "fire watch" must be employed. A professional staff person or trained student staff will be assigned to walk each floor and area of the building at least once each hour and to initiate an evacuation at the first sign of fire or other threat to life or safety. Depending on the occupancy and size of the building, multiple individuals may be required. Note: Fire watches are required on vacant buildings when the fire suppression or fire alarm system is impaired.

Authority:

2025 California Fire Code (CFC), 2025 California Building Code (CBC), California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 19.

Definitions:

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.

Requirements:

Duties:

Fire Watch Personnel Shall:

1. Can be employees of the Contractor responsible for the project, or professional contracted staff from an outside vendor approved by the UC Merced Campus Fire Marshal. UC Merced staff or student staff can perform fire watch once they have received training from the UC Merced Campus Fire Marshal or approved Fire staff.

2. Have normal vision and smell to sense a fire.
3. Able to communicate clearly and effectively.
4. Be familiar with the area they are patrolling to assist with evacuation, including knowing the address and building name to report an emergency.
5. Follow an all-inclusive inspection route that will encompass a visit to all accessible areas/rooms in a logical sequence. Patrolling includes storage areas, hazardous areas, break rooms, and exit corridors.
6. Wear clothing that clearly identifies them as fire watch personnel.
7. Patrol the building at a minimum of no less than every hour. Note: Depending on the impairment, patrols may be increased to every 30 minutes. Patrolling the building includes walking the floor(s) actively looking for fire, smoke and being observant of anything unusual, such as heat, odors which may warrant further investigation.
8. Have a working cell phone and knowledge on how to communicate with UC Merced dispatchers, and first responders. Fire watch personnel shall be able to notify 9-1-1 and UC Merced dispatch at 209.228.2677 of an emergency.
9. Know how and when to use a fire extinguisher and provide proof of training or receive training from Fire & Building Safety (FABS) staff.
10. Be properly trained in fire behavior and fire causes and shall know the location of the fire extinguishers and pull stations.
11. Have the ability to audibly alert the occupants of an emergency (i.e. megaphone, air horn, fire alarm or another device).
12. Not be impaired and shall always remain awake and alert.
13. Fire watch personnel are not permitted, while on duty, to perform any other duties until the fire protection system has been returned to service.
14. Fire watch personnel shall relay any special orders or pertinent information to relief personnel and/or management.
15. Fire watch personnel shall remain on duty until properly relieved or the buildings fire and life safety systems have been returned to service.
16. Keep a log of all Fire Watch related activities on the fire watch log. The log shall include the address of the facility, time out and time in of each patrol, name of the Fire Watch designee and notes regarding other related activities observed.
17. Shall not park in any fire lane.
18. Must understand that upon evacuating a building following a fire alarm, actual emergency or scheduled fire drill, they are to check in with UC Merced Police, Fire Incident Commander, etc.
19. Fire watch personnel shall not have friends/family members with them.

Building Manager/Owner/Contractor Responsibility:

1. In addition to fire watch personnel, the Contractor shall provide adequate signage approved by FABS staff. The signage shall be posted on all exterior doors of the facility notifying occupants that the fire alarm system or fire sprinkler system is non-functional. See appendix A for Fire Watch Door notification form.

2. If a manual pull station is impaired, a sign shall be posted at each manual pull station to warn occupants.
3. Provide a fire watch schedule to UC Merced Dispatch and FABS indicating:
    a. When fire watch starts and projected end date. Indicate the impacted building, floors, and system.
    b. Fire watch schedule to show names of personnel and their contact information to include phone number and email address for UC Merced fire watch staff.
4. Email fire watch logs to fabs@ucmerced.edu by Friday, at noon of each week or earlier depending upon the length of the fire watch. See appendix B for Fire Watch log.