I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to minimize the potential loss of life or property by establishing procedures for the conduct of fire watches during occasions when an occupied building’s fire alarm, sprinkler, or life safety system is impaired.

II. DEFINITIONS

Fire Watch. The assignment of a person or persons to an area for the express purpose of notifying the fire department, the building occupants, or both of an emergency; preventing a fire from occurring; extinguishing small fires; or protecting the public from fire or life safety dangers.
III. POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Department to post a fire watch for any building having a fully or partially impaired fire alarm, sprinkler, or life safety system. Such impairments may involve any of several scenarios:

- The fire alarm system is fully functional but the municipal connection is impaired, such that the fire department would not be automatically notified should the alarm be activated.
- A portion of the alarm system is impaired due to maintenance or malfunction, such that one or more system devices are offline.
- The fire alarm system is entirely out of service.
- Sprinkler, fire pump, smoke evacuation, or other such systems are impaired.
- Normal routes of emergency egress are temporarily blocked.

All personnel assigned to fill a fire watch detail shall be properly qualified as defined herein and scheduled in concert with relevant collective bargaining procedures.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. The minimum staffing for a fire watch shall be one (1) dedicated fire watch person or as determined by the Coordinator of Fire & Life Safety. This individual must be over and above the usual staffing level for the facility in question.

   a. Individuals assigned to fire watch details must be trained in fire prevention, fire extinguisher use, and in occupant and fire department notification as part of a training program approved by the Coordinator of Fire & Life Safety.

   b. The URI Police shift supervisor or his/her designee shall be responsible for scheduling fire watch detail personnel.

      i. Fire watch shifts shall first be staffed by on-shift personnel, if available, and/or until supplemental personnel arrive.

      ii. If sufficient on-shift personnel are not available, overtime shifts for fire watch details shall be offered to Public Safety personnel in the following order and in accordance with relevant collective bargaining agreements:

          1. Residence Hall Safety Officers (RHSO) [if the building is a residence hall]
          2. Campus Patrol Persons (CPP)
          3. Campus Police Officers (CPP)

      iii. Overtime for fire details may be offered to other University employees only after first being offered to the above classifications.

      iv. Alternatively, fire watch details may be filled by individuals who are not employed by the University, such as the Kingston Fire Department.

B. Personnel standing a fire watch shall have available the following equipment, provided by the Building Manager and/or Department of Public Safety:

   a. Two-way radio for communication with URI Dispatch

   b. Flashlight
c. Fire extinguisher

d. Air horn (in cases of alarm notification device impairment)

C. At the beginning of each fire watch shift, assigned personnel will:
   a. Sign in on the scheduling sheet and the hourly patrol log.
   b. Complete a radio check with URI Dispatch.

D. During the fire watch detail, assigned personnel will patrol throughout the building or assigned area at least once every hour and/or as required by the Coordinator of Alarm Services, with the first patrol starting at the beginning of the assigned shift.
   a. During patrols, personnel will not only be looking for fire, but making sure that the other fire protection features of the building such as egress routes and alarm systems are available and functioning properly.
   b. The Fire Alarm Panel is to be checked during these patrols.

E. Notifications for fire watches shall be performed as follows:
   a. Trouble alarms with the fire alarm system shall be reported to URI Dispatch for notification of the fire alarm technician “on call”.
   b. In the event a fire, smoke, or other emergency condition is discovered, fire watch personnel will immediately activate the fire alarm using a pull station, if functional, and then contact URI Dispatch, indicating a working fire and requesting that the fire department be dispatched.
      i. If the fire alarm system is unable to sound a general alarm, fire watch personnel will immediately contact URI Dispatch by radio and then use an air horn or other designated means to alert occupants (sounding repeated blasts until all occupants have evacuated the building).
      ii. If a fire extinguisher is readily available, fire watch personnel may attempt to extinguish a small fire provided they feel it is safe to do so.
   c. Should the fire alarm sound locally but the municipal connection is impaired, fire watch personnel will immediately notify Dispatch via radio, indicating an alarm activation and requesting that the fire department be dispatched.
   d. After notifying Dispatch and sounding the fire alarm, fire watch personnel will assist in the orderly evacuation of the building.

F. Detail coverage must be maintained continuously from the start of the fire watch until the fire watch is terminated by the Coordinator of Fire & Life Safety, Coordinator of Alarm Services, or the Rhode Island State Fire Marshal’s Office.
   a. There shall be a documented chain of coverage for this detail in order to maintain fire watch and life safety functions.
   b. Fire watch personnel should be briefed on the specific situation at hand in order to provide public education as needed.
   c. Fire watch personnel shall not leave the premises, except for emergencies, and they must not relinquish their post unless their relief is fit for duty.

G. Every fire watch shall be documented as follows:
   a. A fire watch schedule sheet shall be prepared by the supervisor staffing the details and left on a clipboard at the fire alarm panel in the affected building.
      i. All fire watch detail personnel, regardless of employment, shall sign in and out for their fire watch shift on this sheet. This sheet will be used as verification of work for purposes of payment.
   b. A fire watch log shall be provided by the supervisor and placed at the fire alarm panel. Detail personnel shall use this log to maintain a record of hourly patrols, any adverse conditions found, notifications made, and corrective actions taken.
c. Upon termination of the fire watch, the completed log and schedule sheet(s) shall be submitted to Dispatch, who shall forward them to the Coordinator of Fire & Life Safety for filing.

By order of:

[Signature]

Stephen N. Baker, Director of Public Safety