

Fire Watch Policy & Procedures

Policy

Local fire codes state that if a building fire alarm system is out of service the building cannot be occupied. A Fire Watch is a compromise, which temporarily replaces the function of a supervised building fire alarm system and allows a building to be temporarily occupied while the fire alarm system is out of service. “Out of Service” is defined as follows:

- A. Any part of the fire alarm system in a University building is not performing as designed, or;
- B. The fire alarm telephone line to the Towson University Police Department (TUPD) is inoperative or the building fire alarm notification device in the TUPD Communication Room is inoperative or in “trouble” (i.e., the building fire alarm system is unsupervised).

The purpose of a Fire Watch is to protect human life and protect University property. These procedures are to be implemented with the TU Fire Protection System Impairment Policy that is published and distributed by Emergency Preparedness (OEP).

A Fire Watch is only required in occupied buildings between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m., EXCEPT in buildings where single public assemblies of greater than 50 people will be held. In this case, Fire Watches are required at all times. At other times, building occupants will be notified that the fire alarm system is inoperative, and they will be responsible for their own safety.

The decision to implement a Fire Watch will be made as follows:

I. **Occupied Buildings (Other Than Residence Buildings):**

Occupied Buildings (Other Than Residence Buildings) are defined as all campus buildings other than those listed in Section II. Residence Buildings below.

During normal duty hours (Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.) the decision to implement Fire Watch procedures will be made on a case-by-case basis by OEP in consultation with the Department of Facilities Management.

After normal duty hours and on weekends or holidays, the decision will be made on a case-by-case basis jointly by Facilities Management, TUPD, and OEP. OEP personnel will be immediately notified by the TUPD of the implementation or cancellation of the Fire Watch Procedures in Occupied Buildings by using existing OEP Emergency Notification Procedures.

If a decision is made NOT to implement the Fire Watch Procedures in Occupied Buildings, the following actions will be taken:

- A. **ALL BUILDING OCCUPANTS will be notified that the building fire alarm system is not in service.** Upon completion of this notification, the TUPD will be notified, and they will make the appropriate written log entry.

- B. All building occupants will also be notified when the fire alarm system is being tested before being placed back into service and when the fire alarm system is finally placed back into service. Upon completion of these notifications, the TUPD will be notified, and they will make the appropriate written log entries.
- C. The decision not to implement Fire Watch Procedures will be logged in the TUPD log with the name(s) of the individual(s) responsible for making the decision.

II. **Residence Buildings:**

The following buildings are defined as Residence Buildings for the purpose of this document:

- Barnes Hall
- Barton House
- Douglass House
- Glen Complex (Towers A, B, C, & D)
- Harris Hall
- Marshall Hall
- Millennium Hall
- Newell Hall
- Prettyman Hall
- Residences at 10 West Burke Avenue
- Residence Tower
- Richmond Hall
- Scarborough Hall
- Towson Run Apartments
- Tubman House

The decision to implement the Fire Watch Procedures in **occupied Residence Halls** will always be made by OEP in consultation with Facilities Management. After normal duty hours, OEP personnel will be immediately notified through the TUPD in accordance with existing OEP Emergency Notification Procedures. The OEP person will contact the appropriate Facilities Management supervisor to discuss the situation and arrive at a decision. The OEP person will immediately notify the TUPD of the decision.

The decision to implement the Fire Watch Procedures in **unoccupied Residence Halls** will be made on a case-by-case basis by OEP in consultation with Facilities Management. After normal duty hours, OEP personnel will be immediately notified through the TUPD in accordance with existing OEP Emergency Notification Procedures. The OEP person will contact the appropriate Facilities Management supervisor to discuss the situation and arrive at a decision. The OEP person will immediately notify the TUPD of the decision.

Responsibilities

I. OFFICE OF EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS (OEP):

1. To notify the appropriate off campus agencies (e.g., Baltimore County Fire Department, State Fire Marshall, State Treasurer's Office, etc.) of a malfunction or planned outage of a building fire alarm system.
2. To notify the appropriate off-campus agencies when the inoperative building fire alarm system has been repaired, **tested**, and placed back in service.
3. To make the determination to implement the Fire Watch Procedures in Residence Halls, in consultation with Facilities Management.
4. To notify the TUPD in the event the Fire Watch Procedures are implemented in Residence Halls.
5. To notify the TUPD when any malfunctioning or inoperative building fire alarm system has been repaired, tested, and placed back in service.
6. To assist Facilities Management and the TUPD in implementing and administering these procedures, as required. **This includes performing the "Fire Watch". OEP personnel shall only be contacted when no other Facilities Management maintenance staff is available to respond.**
7. To revise these procedures as necessary and distribute to all organizations directly involved.

II. DEPARTMENT OF FACILITIES MANAGEMENT:

1. To notify the TUPD and OEP of any building fire alarm system malfunction or outage.
2. To make all appropriate notifications. A written record will be maintained of all notifications to include the name and title of the person notified and the time notified. A copy of all notification records will be forwarded to OEP for the files.

NOTE: There are also special events after normal business hours. The appropriate person supervising and/or coordinating these events must also be notified.

The following individuals, at a minimum, will be notified of the implementation and termination of a Fire Watch:

Academic/Administrative Buildings:	Building Coordinator
Residence Halls:	Director, Residence Life
	Residence Hall Area Coordinator
Dining Halls:	Auxiliary Services
	Dining Services
	Building Coordinator

3. To provide a full-time maintenance person for a Fire Watch to be paid by either Auxiliary Services (Program 8 Buildings) or Facilities Management/OEP (Program 7 Buildings). **TO**

IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY OEP IF MAINTENANCE STAFF IS UNAVAILABLE FOR THE FIRE WATCH. If maintenance staff is unavailable, TUPD personnel will man the Fire Watch on a short-term basis (≤ 1 hour).

III. **TOWSON UNIVERSITY POLICE DEPARTMENT (TUPD):**

1. To immediately notify OEP personnel that any building fire alarm system has or will be out of service and that the Fire Watch Procedures have or will have to be implemented. (OEP personnel will be notified in accordance with existing OEP Emergency Notification Procedures.)
2. To provide TUPD personnel on a short-term basis (≤ 1 hour), if maintenance staff is unavailable for the Fire Watch to be paid by either Auxiliary Services (Program 8 Buildings) or Facilities Management/OEP (Program 7 Buildings). **TO IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY OEP IF MAINTENANCE STAFF IS UNAVAILABLE FOR THE FIRE WATCH.**
3. To immediately notify OEP personnel upon the termination of any Fire Watch.
4. To immediately notify OEP personnel of any problems concerning the implementation of the Fire Watch Procedures.
5. To administratively supervise the performance of the Fire Watch Procedures as specified in this document and maintain written logs as required.
6. To **IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY THE BALTIMORE COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT** (BCFD) of any reports of smoke or flames in buildings that are being protected by a Fire Watch. To immediately notify the appropriate OEP person and other persons specified in the Facilities Management Emergency Book and other existing Standard Operating Procedures.
7. To assist in the notification and safe evacuation of building occupants, particularly disabled occupants, in the event of a fire emergency in a building being protected by a Fire Watch.

NOTE: IN AN EMERGENCY, BFPE INTERNATIONAL (THE UNIVERSITY'S FIRE ALARM CONTRACTOR) WILL PROVIDE A FIRE WATCH ON A TWO (2) HOUR NOTIFICATION FROM THE UNIVERSITY. BFPE INTERNATIONAL SHALL ONLY BE CONTACTED IF NO ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL FROM THE UNIVERSITY ARE AVAILABLE TO ASSIST IN THE FIRE WATCH. BFPE INTERNATIONAL PHONE NUMBER: (800) 966-2212

Procedure

Fire Watch Procedures

1. Procedures in this document will be immediately implemented when any building fire alarm system is out of service for more than one (1) hour and it is determined that there is an unacceptable risk either to building occupants or University property. Fire Watches, if required, will cover areas in buildings that are affected by the fire alarm system outage or malfunction. Fire Watches will continue until the fire alarm system has been repaired, tested, and placed back into service.

2. The Fire Watch will be manned by maintenance staff on a voluntary overtime basis. If maintenance staff are unavailable, the Fire Watch will be manned by full-time TUPD personnel (≤ 1 hr) or OEP personnel in accordance with this procedure.

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BFPE INTERNATIONAL PHONE NUMBER: (800) 966-2212

3. A thorough inspection of all public areas, mechanical/electrical rooms, storage areas/closets, kitchens, laundry rooms and other high-risk area in the affected areas of the building must be conducted hourly. If there are any disabled faculty, staff, or residents in the affected areas of occupied buildings, the person(s) conducting the Fire Watch will have a written list, by name and room number, of those disabled individuals.
4. A written log of the Fire Watch must be maintained. The log must include the date, time, name of person(s) conducting the inspection, and the status of the alarm. Upon termination of the Fire Watch, the TUPD Communications Officer (PCO) will forward a copy of the completed logs to OEP.
5. The Fire Watch will be continuous 7 days a week until the alarm system has been repaired, tested, and placed back into service. In buildings which contain a public assembly of more than 50 persons, the Fire Watch will run while the assembly takes place.
6. The individual(s) performing the Fire Watch must contact the TUPD Communications Office either by radio or telephone (410-704-4444) each hour on the hour and report that the inspection has been completed and any changes in the fire alarm system status. The TUPD Communications Officer on duty will log each hourly report (the written log). If a Fire Watch status report has not been received by 30 minutes past the hour (i.e., 30 minutes late), the appropriate Facilities Management Supervisor will be immediately notified. If the Fire Watch status report has not been received in the next 30 minutes, (i.e., 60 minutes late), the appropriate OEP person will be notified, and he will notify the appropriate Facilities Management Supervisor.

Fire Watch Fire Evacuation Procedures

1. In the event of any fire or smoke, the individual(s) performing the Fire Watch must immediately notify the TUPD and the building occupants to evacuate the building. The TUPD will immediately notify the Baltimore County Fire Department and dispatch Police Officers/Aids to assist in the notification and safe evacuation of the building.

AT NO TIME WILL ANYONE ATTEMPT TO LOCATE OR FIGHT THE FIRE! TOWSON UNIVERSITY'S OFFICIAL POLICY IS THAT NO EMPLOYEES WILL FIGHT FIRES IN UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS. THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE IS THE SAFE EVACUATION OF THE BUILDING.

2. Building Occupants will be notified as follows:
 - a) The TUPD, OEP, and/or Facilities Management personnel will utilize bullhorns to get the attention of or awaken building occupants. The horn will be sufficiently sounded on each floor of the building to get the attention of all occupants.

- b) The TUPD will utilize portable public address systems (i.e., bullhorns) on each floor announcing that an emergency exists in the building and that all occupants should immediately exit the building by the quickest route possible. **ELEVATORS ARE NOT TO BE UTILIZED IN AN EMERGENCY.** The message will be repeated to ensure all occupants have been notified.
- c) The TUPD, OEP, or maintenance staff will personally notify disabled staff and students (if safe) of the emergency. All disabled occupants will be accounted for after notification.

NOTICE

The Building Fire Alarm System is Inoperative

FROM _____ TO _____

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Every effort is being made to complete repairs as soon as possible.

Immediately contact the TUPD at 410-704-4444 if any of the following applies:

- See or smell smoke, or;
- Detect the presence of fire, or;
- Smell natural gas, or;
- Detect the presence of any other condition which endangers the life of building occupants.

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In the event of an emergency, BULLHORNS will be utilized by TUPD, OEP, or maintenance staff to notify Building Occupants to immediately evacuate the building.

In an emergency, please evacuate the building as quickly as possible using the most direct route. Building occupants will be notified when the fire alarm has been repaired.
If you have any questions, contact OEP at 410-704-3834.