



FIRE PROCEDURES FOR FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS

State of Wisconsin / Department of Health Services / Division of Quality Assurance
P-01729 (11/2018)

Fire Plan

Life Safety Code §§ 18.7.2.2 and 19.7.2.2 require facilities to have a written fire safety plan specific to their location that outlines the minimal actions required by facility personnel upon discovery of fire. The plan shall include the following:

- (1) Use of alarms
- (2) Transmission of alarm to fire department
- (3) Emergency phone call to fire department
- (4) Response to alarms
- (5) Isolation of fire
- (6) Evacuation of immediate area
- (7) Evacuation of smoke compartment
- (8) Preparation for floors and building for evacuation
- (9) Extinguishment of fire

Fire Reporting

The licensed facilities listed below are required to report a fire event to the Division of Quality Assurance within the time specified in Wisconsin Administrative Code. Reportable fire events may include smoke from an oven, electrical fires, fire alarm activation, etc.

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| • Adult Family Homes | DHS § 88.05(4)(e) | within 72 hours |
| • Community-Based Residential Facilities | DHS § 83.12(4)(e) | within 3 working days |
| • ICF / IID | DHS § 134.82(4)(e) | within 72 hours |
| • Hospitals | DHS § 124.36(11) | within 72 hours |
| • Nursing Homes | DHS § 132.82(3)(e) | within 72 hours |

A fire report must be completed online. An approved fire report survey is available at:

[Health Care Facility Fire Report, F-62500](#)

Fire Watch

Fire Watch procedures involve the assignment of a dedicated person or persons with no other duties, constantly circulating throughout the facility or affected area, with the express purpose of notifying the fire department and the building occupants of an emergency; preventing a fire from occurring; extinguishing small fires; or protecting the public from fire or danger. Reference the 2012 edition of National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 101 Life Safety Code (LSC) § 3.3.104 and the Federal Register Vol. 81 No. 86.

The requirement for a “fire watch” appears in the 2012 LSC as:

Where a required fire alarm system is out of service for more than 4 hours in a 24-hour period, the authority having jurisdiction shall be notified, and the building shall be evacuated or an approved fire watch shall be provided for all parties left unprotected by the shutdown until the fire alarm system has been returned to service. LSC § 9.6.1.6

Fire Watch Procedure Guidance for Fire Alarm Outages

This guidance should be modified to meet each facility's unique operational needs.

Plan: A plan of action is required should the fire alarm system fail to work properly for more than four hours in a 24-hour period. A fire alarm system could include, but is not limited to, the fire alarm panel, initiating devices, and notification appliances.

Availability: The written plan needs to be available at all staff stations. Training needs to be given to all personnel that may be asked to perform a fire watch.

Personnel: The watch requires dedicated personnel, trained and familiar with the facility's fire plan, who have the responsibility to implement the fire watch rounds throughout the affected area(s).

Documentation: Fire watch rounds need to be documented with findings which will include the date, time, and initials of personnel performing the watch. A fire watch round is a continuous activity performed by having assigned personnel walking the entire affected area of the system outage. During the round, personnel monitor the facility through direct observation for possible signs of fire.

Occurrences: Fire alarm system outages can occur during construction, electrical storms, or other planned or unplanned events which eliminate part or all of the system.

What to Do:

1. Observation of fire or smoke during this fire watch should immediately initiate the facility's fire safety plan.
2. Contact the facility administrator, director of nursing, and maintenance manager when any problems are encountered with the fire alarm system.
3. Contact a fire alarm contractor should the maintenance manager not be able to correct the problem. The fire alarm contractor shall be on site or on contract until the system is repaired, replaced, and/or working.
4. Notify the fire department that the fire alarm system is not working correctly.
5. Notify the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Quality Assurance through our central email address: dhsdqaplanreview@wi.gov
6. Fire watch rounds shall designate the wing, floor, or building area affected.
7. Fire watch rounds shall occur continuously.
8. Fire watch rounds shall be performed by personnel solely dedicated to the fire watch and who have no other facility-related activities or responsibilities.
9. A fire watch round should include observation and documentation for the following in **ALL** rooms including:
 - Patient/resident rooms (Remove smoking materials and extension cords.)
 - Dietary and laundry rooms (Remove lint from dryers and soiled linen.)
 - Mechanical and electrical rooms (Remove combustible/flammable materials.)
 - Clear access to the facility for the fire department. (Remove snow and ice.)
 - Clear access to hydrants, sprinkler connections, standpipes, and fire extinguishers for the fire department.

- Ensure exit access corridors, exits, and exit discharges are unobstructed.
 - Storage of combustible or flammable materials shall be in approved containers or designated storage areas.
 - Identify temporary heating devices and have them removed.
 - Ensure fire and smoke doors close properly.
 - Ensure unnecessary machinery which is running continuously is turned off.
 - Sprinkler valves shall be open and sealed; gauges should indicate normal pressures and sprinkler heads shall be unobstructed.
 - Ensure construction or renovation work areas have no hot work operations.
10. Maintenance personnel shall be available on site or on call for equipment emergency shutdown situations.
11. Additional fire extinguishers shall be distributed facility-wide and personnel shall be informed of their location.

A suggested “*Fire Watch Rounds: Fire Alarm System*” form is available on page 4.

