



Subject: Fire Protection Impairment Program  
Reference: NFPA (see bottom of page 5) Effective Date: Upon Approval  
Distribution: All Employment Department (OED) Employees, contractors, vendors.

<b>Purpose:</b>	To establish procedures to be followed when a fire protection system is taken out of service due to construction, alteration, power outage, repair or an emergency condition. These procedures include measures taken during the impairment to ensure that increased risks are minimized and the duration of the impairment is limited. Procedures set forth in this policy do not apply to routine scheduled maintenance or testing.
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## **OVERVIEW**

The probability of a fire or explosion causing major damage is increased whenever a fire protection system is impaired. The longer the fire protection system is impaired, the greater the probability becomes. Therefore, it is necessary to minimize the duration and scope of any impairment or provide for an alternate protection system.

A Fire Protection Impairment Program is an effective management program used to:

- Supervise the safe shutdown of fire protection systems
- Control potential fire hazards during the impairments
- Restore the fire protection system to service as soon as possible

## **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all OED employees, outside contractors and their representatives, or any company representative contracted by OED to provide services or any outside trade workers who will be working on OED owned or leased facilities.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Fire Protection Systems:** Sprinkler systems, standpipe systems, underground fire service mains, fire pumps, water storage tanks, water spray fixed systems, foam-water systems, special extinguishing systems, fire service control valves, fire alarms systems, and emergency lights.

**Firewatch:** A person or persons designated to physically patrol the area where the fire protection system is impaired.

**Impairment:** a shutdown, in whole or part, of a fire protection system.

1. **Emergency impairment:** when a fire protection system is out of service due to an unexpected occurrence, such as a ruptured pipe or an unexpected power outage.

2. **Planned impairment:** when a fire protection system is out of service due to work that has been planned in advance, such as revisions to the water supply or sprinkler piping system.

3. **Level 2 impairment:** when a limited number of components of a fire protection system are found defective or removed from service. A Level 2 impairment represents a minimal impact to the overall life safety of building occupants.

4. **Level 1 impairment:** a shutdown of an entire fire protection system, or major portion, significantly affecting occupant life safety.

**Impairment Coordinator (IC):** The person who manages the impairment while system work is being performed and has overall responsibility for proper implementation of the Fire Protection Impairment Program. The Property and Risk Management Manager or designee will be designated as the Impairment Coordinator.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **OED Employees**

- Any employee who impairs a fire protection system, in whole or part, must first notify the Impairment Coordinator. If an impairment permit is required, the employee will attach the Fire & Life Safety System Permit/Impairment Tag (Schedule A) to the fire department connection for sprinkler system impairments or to the fire alarm annunciator/control panel for fire alarm systems.

### **Contractors, Outside Workers, Outside Company Representatives**

- Any Contractor/contractor's representative or outside worker who impairs a fire protection system, in whole or part, must first notify the Impairment Coordinator. If an impairment permit is required, the contractor, contractor's representative, or outside worker will attach the Fire & Life Safety System Permit/Impairment Tag (Schedule A) to the fire department connection for sprinkler system impairments or to the fire alarm annunciator/control panel for fire alarm systems.

### **Impairment Coordinator (IC)**

- The IC will determine the level of impairment due to a shutdown, in whole or part, of a fire protection system.
- The IC will be responsible for completion of the Impairment Worksheet (Schedule B) when authorizing Level 1 impairments.
- The IC will be responsible for issuing and verifying removal of fire & life safety system permit/impairment tags when authorizing Level 1 impairments.
- The IC will be responsible for coordination of the firewatch, if it has been determined that a firewatch is necessary. The IC will document firewatch activities on Schedule C, the Firewatch Log Sheet.
- The IC will be responsible for providing training to OED employees who will be utilized as firewatch personnel.

## **IMPAIRMENT COORDINATION PROCEDURES – LEVEL 2**

### **Preplanned Impairments**

- All level 2 impairments, both preplanned and emergency, must be reported to the impairment coordinator.
- OED Property and Risk Management will be notified of a preplanned impairment of a fire alarm system.
- The fire alarm monitoring company, if utilized to monitor that particular fire alarm system, will be notified of a preplanned impairment of a fire alarm system.
- The impairment coordinator will ensure that level 2 impairments are satisfactorily remediated.

## **IMPAIRMENT COORDINATION PROCEDURES – LEVEL 1**

- OED Property and Risk Management will be notified of a preplanned impairment of a fire alarm system.
- The fire alarm monitoring company, if utilized to monitor that particular fire alarm system, will be notified of a preplanned impairment of a fire alarm system.
- The Local Office Manager for the affected building will be notified of the preplanned impairment.
- The impairment coordinator will complete the Impairment Worksheet (Schedule B).
- The impairment coordinator will complete the fire & life safety system permit/impairment tag (Schedule A). The IC will authorize the preplanned impairment and verify that the following procedures have been implemented:
  1. The extent and expected duration of the impairment have been determined.
  2. The areas or buildings involved have been considered and the increased risks determined.
  3. When a required automatic sprinkler system is out of service for an extended duration, the impairment coordinator will arrange for one of the following:
    - a) Evacuation of the building or portion of the building affected by the system out of service, or
    - b) A fire watch for all portions of the building left unprotected by the shutdown until the fire alarm or sprinkler system has been returned to service. A fire watch utilized for a fire alarm or automatic sprinkler system shutdown will be composed of individuals beyond normal staffing, assigned to walk the areas affected. The number of fire watch personnel utilized will be determined by the impairment coordinator. Firewatch personnel used for fire alarm shutdowns must be specially trained in fire prevention and in occupant and fire department notification techniques. Fire watch personnel used for automatic sprinkler system shutdowns must be specially trained in fire prevention and in the use of fire extinguishers, and in occupant and fire department notification techniques.
  4. When a required fire alarm system is out of service for an extended duration, the impairment coordinator will arrange for one of the following:
    - a) Evacuation of the building or portion of the building affected by the system out of service, or
    - b) Implementation of mitigating measures for the period that the system is impaired. This considers the building occupancy type, nature and duration of impairment, building occupancy level

during the impairment period, active work being conducted on the fire alarm system during the impairment, condition of other fire protection systems and features, and hazards and assets at risk. Appropriate mitigating measures range from simple occupant notification to full-time fire watch.

5. Sprinkler systems: the impairment coordinator will complete or authorize a Fire & Life Safety System Permit/Impairment Tag (Schedule A), making sure it is located at the fire department connection, indicating which system, or part thereof, has been removed from service.
6. Fire alarm systems: the impairment coordinator will complete or authorize a Fire & Life Safety System Permit/Impairment Tag (Schedule A), making sure it is located at the fire alarm annunciator or fire alarm control panel.

### **Emergency Impairment Procedures**

When an emergency impairment occurs, emergency action will be taken to minimize potential injury and damage.

- The impairment coordinator will implement items 1 through 6 of section *Preplanned Impairments* with the following exception:
  - Any damage to fire protection systems caused by the contractor will be repaired by a licensed fire protection company at the contractor's expense. Any required firewatch activities due to damage of the fire protection equipment will be supplied by the contractor. Contractor must supply their own firewatch activities to ensure compliance with this policy and other OED policies, i.e. Hot Work Permit.

### **Restoring Systems to Service**

When all impaired equipment is restored to normal working order, the impairment coordinator will verify that the following procedures have been implemented:

- Any necessary inspections and tests have been conducted to verify that affected systems are operational.
- Local Office Managers for the affected buildings have been advised that protection is restored.
- If a fire alarm system is involved, Property and Risk Management and monitoring company (if any) have been advised that protection is restored.
- The Fire & Life Safety System Permit/Impairment Tag has been removed.

### **REFERENCES**

NFPA 1 – 13.3.4 (2003 ed.), Uniform Fire Code  
NFPA 25 – 14 (2003 ed.), Maintenance of Water Based Fire Protection Systems  
NFPA 72 – 4.6 & 10.2.1.2, National Fire Alarm Code  
NFPA 101 – 9.6.1.7 & 9.7.6 (2003 ed.), Life Safety Code  
International Fire Code, 2003 ed.

Schedule A

**Fire & Life Safety System Impairment Permit/Tag**

(Please attach tag to Fire Department Connection or  
Fire Alarm Annunciator/Control Panel)

Building Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of system impaired: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for impairment: \_\_\_\_\_

Extent of impairment: \_\_\_\_\_

Date system shutoff: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected date of restoration: \_\_\_\_\_

Impairment authorized by: \_\_\_\_\_

# **Schedule B**

## **Impairment Worksheet**

### **Core Information**

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_ Bldg: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of system impaired: \_\_\_\_\_

Extent of impairment: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for impairment: \_\_\_\_\_

Date impairment to begin: \_\_\_\_\_ Estimated completion date: \_\_\_\_\_

Person(s) conducting work: \_\_\_\_\_

Person responsible for mounting impairment tag: \_\_\_\_\_

Firewatch required? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, number of persons: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Reminders**

Area inspected and risks determined? \_\_\_\_\_

Prohibitions involved? \_\_\_\_\_

Building evacuated? \_\_\_\_\_ Impairment tag issued? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Notifications**

Have notifications been sent of the impairment? \_\_\_\_\_

Has monitoring company, if any, been notified of the impairment? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Restoration**

Has the affected system been inspected and tested operational? \_\_\_\_\_

Has the impairment tag been removed? \_\_\_\_\_

Have notifications been sent of the restoration? \_\_\_\_\_

Has monitoring company, if any, been notified of the restoration? \_\_\_\_\_

