

Fire Watch Compliance Checklist

A quick-reference guide for property managers, from Hammerhead Security

When a fire suppression or alarm system goes out of service, most local fire codes require continuous fire watch coverage until it's restored. Use this checklist to confirm your coverage is actually compliant — not just a person standing near an exit.

Before Fire Watch Begins

- ☐ Confirm which system is impaired (sprinkler, standpipe, alarm) and the affected area's boundaries
- ☐ Notify your local fire marshal or authority having jurisdiction, if required in your municipality
- ☐ Confirm patrol frequency required by local code (commonly every 30 minutes, but verify locally)
- ☐ Brief the fire watch officer on evacuation routes and manual alarm pull station locations
- ☐ Establish an emergency notification chain (who gets called first if a hazard is spotted)

During Fire Watch Coverage

- ☐ Officer conducts and logs patrols at the required interval, with timestamps
- ☐ Patrol log is kept on-site and accessible for inspection at any time
- ☐ Officer carries a means of immediate communication (radio or phone) at all times
- ☐ Any hazard, obstruction, or additional risk observed is documented immediately
- ☐ Coverage continues without gaps — shift changes are planned, not improvised

When the Impaired System Is Restored

- ☐ Confirm the system has been tested and verified functional before ending fire watch
- ☐ Obtain written confirmation from the contractor or technician who completed repairs
- ☐ Retain the complete patrol log — insurers and inspectors may request it after the fact
- ☐ Notify the fire marshal or AHJ that coverage has ended, if you notified them at the start

Common Compliance Gaps

Fire watch coverage most often fails compliance review for one of these reasons: patrols aren't actually logged with timestamps, coverage has an unplanned gap during a shift change, the officer isn't briefed on the site's specific evacuation plan, or coverage ends before the system is verified — not just repaired.

This checklist is a general reference and does not replace your local fire code or the requirements of your authority having jurisdiction (AHJ). Requirements vary by municipality — confirm specifics locally.

Need fire watch coverage? Hammerhead Security provides 24/7 fire watch with digital patrol logging through BluewaterOS. hammerheadsecurity.org | (252) 725-8356