



## Fire Chiefs' Association of Broward County Standard Operating Guidelines

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**Subject: Fire Watch and Crowd Manager**

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### **I. Purpose/Intent:**

*The most cost-effective way of reducing the staggering loss from fire is having a proactive Community Risk Reduction Program.*

One of the important community risk reduction tools available to the Fire Chief and Fire Marshal is the use of a Fire Watch. There are a number of situations where the use of a Fire Watch is an effective alternative mechanism of achieving an acceptable level of safety when other methods are not practical. It is important to remember that the use of a Fire Watch in place of Fire Code requirements is not an acceptable alternative unless specifically provided for in the Fire Code.

When a situation arises requiring a quick solution to a Fire Code issue about whether to establish a Fire Watch, it can be a difficult decision. A Fire Watch can be effective in the following situations but are not limited to:

- Fire alarm system temporarily out of service
- Smoke evacuation/control system temporarily out of service
- Sprinkler system temporarily out of service
- Use of close-proximity fireworks both inside and/or outside Fireworks displays
- Use of tents and membrane structures for public assembly
- Hazardous operations such as:
  - Building demolition
  - Hot work activities
  - Public displays using open flame Motion Picture & Television Productions
  - Fueling & refueling operations
  - Open fires/celebrations

Prior to establishing a Fire Watch, the method for paying for the cost of personnel should be established and any contractual requirements should be considered. The cost of conducting a Fire Watch can be considerable and will play a part in the decision-making process. Quite often occupancies that are reluctant to comply with life safety requirements find it more cost-effective to resolve the problem rather than pay for a Fire Watch. An example of this is where a life safety system is down for repairs, but management wants to keep the building occupied until repairs are completed

It is important for the Fire Department to have specific rules and guidelines for the Fire Watch personnel to follow when conducting a Fire Watch. Failure to properly prepare and supervise Fire Watch personnel could subject the employer to increased liability. Fire Watch personnel should be readily identifiable with any necessary equipment. As a minimum, a means of direct communication with emergency services would be required.

## II. Definition(s): Fire Watch and their Responsibilities

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. **(1:3.3.129 & 101:3.3.108)**

- A. **Fire Watch** – A temporary measure intended to ensure continuous and systematic surveillance of a building or portion thereof by one or more qualified individuals or standby personnel when required by the Fire Code Official, for the purpose of identifying and controlling fire hazards, detecting early signs of unwanted fire, raising an alarm of fire and notifying the fire department.
- B. **Standby Personnel** – Qualified fire service personnel, approved by the Fire Chief. When utilized, the number required shall be as directed by the Fire Chief. Charges for utilization shall be as normally calculated by the jurisdiction.

## III. Authorities given to the AHJ:

- A. The AHJ shall have the authority to require standby fire personnel or an approved fire watch when potentially hazardous conditions or a reduction in a life safety feature exist due to the type of performance, display, exhibit, occupancy, contest or activity, an impairment to a fire protection feature, or the number of persons present. **(1:1.7.17.1)**
- B. The owner, agent, or lessee shall employ one or more qualified persons, as required and approved, to be on duty. **(1:1.7.17.2)**
- C. The cost of standby fire personnel shall be at no cost to the AHJ. **(1:1.7.17.2.1)**
- D. Such standby fire personnel or fire watch personnel shall be subject to the AHJ's orders at all times and shall be identifiable and remain on duty during the times such places are open to the public, when such activity is being conducted, or as required by the AHJ. **(1:1.7.17.3)**
- E. Before each performance or the start of such activity, such individuals should inspect the required fire appliances provided to see that they are properly located and in good working order and should keep diligent watch for fires during the time such place is open to the public or such activity is being conducted and take prompt measures for extinguishment of fires that can occur. **(1:A.1.7.17.3)**
- F. **Standby Fire Personnel** – Where required by the AHJ, standby fire personnel shall be provided and comply with 1.7.17. **(1:10.14.4)**
- G. **Standby Fire-Watch** - Whenever in the opinion of the Fire Chief it is essential for public safety in any place of public assembly or any other place where people congregate, due to the number of persons, or the nature of the performance, exhibition, display, contest or activity, the Fire Chief may require the owner, agent or lessee to employ one or more certified Fire Inspectors or firefighters, as required and approved by the Fire Chief, to be on duty at such place. Said Fire Inspectors/firefighters shall be subject to the Fire Chiefs and/or designee's orders at all times, when so employed, and remain on duty during the times such places are open to the public, or when such activity is being conducted. Before each performance or the start of such activity,

said Fire Inspector/firefighter shall inspect all required fire/life safety equipment, to ensure that such equipment is in proper working order, and shall keep diligent watch for any emergency that should arise. Should any emergency arise, the Fire Inspector/firefighter shall take whatever action necessary to protect the occupants and public from injury or any life-threatening condition. (BCA – F-107.1)

*Refer to appropriate sections of the Fire Code for specific requirements of the code.*

#### **IV. Procedure: Fire Watches required by the Fire Code**

##### **A. Fire Detection, Alarm, and Communication Systems out of service**

**1:13.1.11** – In the event of a failure of a fire protection system or an excessive number of accidental activations, the AHJ shall be permitted to require an approved fire watch until the system is repaired.

**1:13.7.1.5.3** – The AHJ shall be authorized to require standby fire personnel or an approved fire watch in accordance with 1.7.16 at premises in which required fire alarm systems are impaired or classified as chronic nuisance alarm prone systems.

##### **B. Sprinkler System Shutdown**

**1:13.3.3.6.5.2(4)** - Where a required fire protection system is out of service for more than 10 hours in a 24-hour period, the impairment coordinator shall arrange for one of the following:

1. Evacuation of the building or portion of the building affected by the system out of service.
2. An approved fire watch
3. Establishment of temporary water supply
4. Establishment and implementation of an approved program to eliminate potential ignition sources and limit the amount of fuel available to the fire.

##### **C. Pyrotechnics before a proximate audience**

**BCA F-120.7.2** - The local Fire Marshal/Fire Code Official, or his/her duly authorized representative at their discretion, shall require standby fire watch personnel employed by the AHJ of the fire department, to be on duty for each display or performance. When deemed necessary by the local Fire Marshal/Fire Code Official, or his/her duly authorized representative, additional fire and rescue apparatus may be required for the display or performance. Any and all expense(s) of standby personnel services and apparatus shall be borne by the permit holder.

**BCA F-120.7.2.1** – Standby fire watch personnel shall be on duty from the time of display setup, during the display, and until termination of the display and removal of all pyrotechnic materials, debris, and devices from the site.

**BCA F-120.7.2.2** – In the case of indoor displays or performances, standby fire watch personnel shall be maintained until total restoration of normal functioning of the fire safety systems has been verified.

**BCA F-120.7.2.3** – At a minimum, at least one of the assigned standby fire watch personnel shall be a BORA Certified Fire Inspector.

**D. Display of fireworks both public and private**

**BCA F-120.1.6.2.9.1** - The Fire Chief, or his/her duly authorized representative, shall require one or more standby fire watch personnel employed by the Fire Department, to be on-duty for each display or performance. When deemed necessary the Fire Chief or his/her duly authorized representative, additional fire rescue apparatus may be required for the display or performance. The expense of such personnel services and apparatus shall be borne by the permit holder and shall be paid prior to issuance of the permit.

**BCA F-120.1.6.2.9.2** - The standby fire watch personnel shall be on duty from the time the display set up, during the display, and until termination of the display and removal of all fireworks, debris, pyrotechnical materials, and devices from the site.

**BCA F-120.1.6.2.9.3** – In the case of indoor displays or performances, standby fire watch personnel shall be maintained until total restoration of normal function of the fire safety systems has been verified.

**BCA F-120.1.6.2.9.4** - At a minimum, at least one of the assigned standby fire watch personnel shall be a B.O.R.A. Certified Fire Inspector.

**E. Use of tents and membrane structures for public assembly**

**1:25.1.8** – Fire Detail. See 1.7.17 for fire detail requirements.

**F. Fire Safety during Demolition**

**1:16.5.4** – Where in the opinion of the AHJ the demolition site is of a hazardous nature, qualified personnel shall serve as an on-site fire watch.

**G. Hot work where certain conditions are present**

**1:41.1.2** - The following section shall apply to welding and allied processes, heat treating, grinding, thawing pipe, powder-driven fasteners, hot riveting, and torch applied roofing in conjunction with the requirements of Section 16.6, and similar applications producing or using a spark, flame, or heat.

**1:41.2.4.1** – The fire watch shall be trained to understand the inherent hazards of the work site and of the hot work.

**1:41.2.4.2** - The fire watch shall ensure that safe conditions are maintained during hot work operations.

**1:41.2.4.3** - The fire watch shall have the authority to stop the hot work operations if unsafe conditions develop.

**1:41.2.4.4\*** - The fire watch shall have fire-extinguishing equipment readily available and shall be trained in its use.

**1:41.2.4.5** - The fire watch shall be familiar with the facilities and procedures for sounding an alarm in the event of a fire.

**1:41.2.4.6** - The fire watch shall watch for fires in all exposed areas and try to extinguish them only when the fires are obviously within the capacity of the equipment available. If the fire watch determines that the fire is not within the capacity of the equipment, the fire watch shall sound the alarm immediately.

**1:41.2.4.7** – The fire watch shall be permitted to perform additional tasks, but those tasks shall not distract him or her from the fire watch responsibilities, except as outlined in Section 41.4.

**1:41.3.5.1** - A fire watch shall be required by the PAI (permit authorizing individual) when hot work is performed in a location where other than a minor fire might develop or where the following conditions exist:

- (1) Combustible materials in building construction or contents are closer than 35 feet to the point of hot work operation.
- (2) Combustible materials are more than 35 feet away but are easily ignited by sparks.
- (3) Wall or floor openings within a 35-foot radius expose combustible materials in adjacent areas, including concealed spaces in walls or floors.
- (4) Combustible materials are adjacent to the opposite side of partitions, walls, ceilings, or roofs and are likely to be ignited.

**1:41.3.5.2** - A fire watch shall be maintained for at least ½ hour after completion of hot work operations in order to detect and extinguish smoldering fires. The duration of the fire watch shall be extended if the PAI determines the fire hazards warrant the extension.

**1:41.3.5.3\*** - More than one fire watch shall be required if combustible materials that could be ignited by the hot work operation cannot be directly observed by the initial fire watch.

#### H. **Picture & Television Productions**

**1:32.4.4.1** – Where required by the AHJ, standby fire personnel shall be provided for soundstages and approved production facilities where pyrotechnic special effects are used.

**1:32.5.4.1** – Pyrotechnics – Standby fire personnel shall be required for production locations where pyrotechnics special effects are used, unless otherwise waived by the AHJ.

**1:32.5.4.2** – Other Hazards – Where required by the AHJ, standby fire personnel shall be provided for hazardous operations, other than pyrotechnic special effects.

#### V. **Crowd Manager**

In accordance with the Florida Fire Prevention Code and at the discretion of the AHJ, all assembly occupancies as described in the definition below shall be required to provide adequate and trained crowd management personnel.

##### A. **Definition of Crowd Manager and their Responsibilities:**

1. An occupancy (1) used for a gathering of 50 or more persons for deliberation, worship, entertainment, eating, drinking, amusement, awaiting transportation, or similar uses; or (2) used as a special amusement building, regardless of occupant load. (**1:3.3.192.3 & 101:3.3.196.2**)

2. The Crowd Manager will be responsible for tasks such as but not limited to; maintaining clear paths of egress, ensure the facility does not exceed its approved occupant load limit, verifying fire suppression/detection systems are operational, initiate a fire alarm if necessary and directing occupants to exits, assure exit announcements are made via an audible announcement prior to the start of each program or performance notifying occupants of the locations of exits to be used in emergencies & complete the Crowd Manager Fire and Life Safety Event checklist prior to opening the facility or event.

**B. Crowd Managers required by the Fire Code**

**1:20.1.5.6.1, 101:12.7.6.1 & 101:13.7.6.1** – Assembly occupancies shall be provided with a minimum of one trained crowd manager or crowd manager supervisor. Where the occupant load exceeds 250, additional trained crowd managers or crowd manager supervisors shall be provided at a ratio of 1 crowd manager or crowd supervisor for every 250 occupants, unless otherwise permitted by one of the following:

- (1) This requirement shall not apply to assembly occupancies used exclusively for religious worship with an occupant load not exceeding 500.
- (2) The ratio of trained crowd managers to occupants shall be permitted to be reduced where, in the opinion of the AHJ, the existence of an approved, supervised automatic sprinkler system and the nature of the event warrant.

For Example:

Occupant load 50-250 requires	1 Crowd Manager
Occupant load 251-500 requires	2 Crowd Managers
Occupant load 501-750 requires	3 Crowd Managers

**1:20.1.5.6.2, 101:12.7.6.2 & 101:13.7.6.2** – The crowd manager shall receive approved training in crowd management techniques.

**A.20.1.5.6.2** – Crowd managers and crowd manager supervisors need to clearly understand the required duties and responsibilities specific to the venue’s emergency plan. The crowd management training program should include a clear appreciation of crowd dynamics factors including space, energy, time, and information, as well as specific crowd management techniques, such as metering. Training should involve specific actions necessary during normal and emergency operations, and include an assessment of people handling capabilities of a space prior to its use, the identification of hazards, an evaluation of projected levels of occupancy, the adequacy of means of ingress and egress and identification of ingress and egress barriers, the processing procedures such as ticket collection, and the expected types of emergency evacuations and , where required by the emergency plan, relocation and shelter-in-place operations, and the challengers associated with each.

**101:12.7.6.3 & 101:13.7.6.3** – Duties and responsibilities for the crowd manager supervisor shall be documented within a written emergency plan as required in 12.7.13.

**101:12.7.6.4\* & 101:13.7.6.4** – The training for the duties and responsibilities of crowd managers shall include the following:

- (1) Understanding crowd manager roles and responsibilities
- (2) Understanding safety and security hazards that can endanger public assembly
- (3) Understanding crowd management techniques

- (4) Introduction to fire safety and fire safety equipment
- (5) Understanding methods of evacuation and movement
- (6) Understanding procedures for reporting emergencies
- (7) Understanding crowd management emergency response procedures
- (8) Understanding the paths of travel and exits, facility evacuation and emergency response procedures and, where provided, facility shelter-in-place procedures
- (9) Familiarization with the venue and guest services training
- (10) Other specific event-warranted training

**101:12.7.6.5 & 101:13.7.6.5** – The training for the duties and responsibilities of crowd manager supervisors shall include the following:

- (1) The duties described in 12.7.6.4
- (2) Understanding crowd manager supervisor roles and responsibilities
- (3) Understanding incident management procedures
- (4) Understanding the facility evacuation plan
- (5) Understanding the facility command structure

*\*\* Training shall consist of any course approved by the NFPA or another training provider accepted by the AHJ.*