

BILLINGS FIRE DEPARTMENT

FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU

(406) 657-8423

FAX (406) 657-8456



FIRE WATCH INFORMATION PACKET

A fire watch provides temporary fire safety where there are potential hazards, such as out of service fire protection systems. A fire watch is not simply to watch for a fire but also to prevent fire by identifying and controlling fire hazards. A fire watch also provides a method of notifying the fire department if a fire should occur. The following is the definition of a fire watch:

FIRE WATCH. A temporary measure intended to ensure continuous and systematic surveillance of a building or portion thereof by one or more qualified individuals for the purposes of identifying and controlling fire hazards, detecting early signs of unwanted fire, raising an alarm of fire and notifying the fire department.

The **Fire Code of the City of Billings, Montana** contains the following code requirements regulating a fire watch:

901.7 Systems out of service.

Where a required *fire protection system* is out of service, the fire department and the *fire code official* shall be notified immediately and, where required by the *fire code official*, the building shall either be evacuated or an approved fire watch shall be provided for all occupants left unprotected by the shutdown until the *fire protection system* has been returned to service.

Where utilized, fire watches shall be provided with at least one *approved* means for notification of the fire department and their only duty shall be to perform constant patrols of the protected premises and keep watch for fires.

901.7.1 Impairment coordinator. The **building owner** shall assign an impairment coordinator to comply with the requirements of this section. In the absence of a specific designee, the *owner* shall be considered the impairment coordinator.

901.7.2 Tag required. A tag shall be used to indicate that a system, or portion thereof, has been removed from service.

901.7.3 Placement of tag. The tag shall be posted at each fire department connection, system control valve, fire alarm control unit, fire alarm annunciator and *fire command center*, indicating which system, or part thereof, has been removed from service. The *fire code official* shall specify where the tag is to be placed.

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901.7.4 Preplanned impairment programs. Preplanned impairments shall be authorized by the impairment coordinator. Before authorization is given, a designated individual shall be responsible for verifying that all of 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 inspected and the increased risks determined.
3. Recommendations have been submitted to management or building *owner/manager*.
4. The fire department has been notified.
5. The insurance carrier, the alarm company, building *owner/manager*, and other authorities having jurisdiction have been notified.
6. The supervisors in the areas to be affected have been notified.
7. A tag impairment system has been implemented.
8. Necessary tools and materials have been assembled on the impairment site.

901.7.5 Emergency impairments. When unplanned impairments occur, appropriate emergency action shall be taken to minimize potential injury and damage. The impairment coordinator shall implement the steps outlined in Section 901.7.4.

901.7.6 Restoring systems to service. When impaired equipment is restored to normal working order, the impairment coordinator shall verify that all of the following procedures have been implemented:

1. Necessary inspections and tests have been conducted to verify that affected systems are operational.
2. Supervisors have been advised that protection is restored.
3. The fire department has been advised that protection is restored.
4. The building *owner/manager*, insurance carrier, alarm company and other involved parties have been advised that protection is restored.
5. The impairment tag has been removed.

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The fire watch must be properly documented to maintain accountability and ensure the fire watch is occurring continuously. A fire watch log sheet is provided and is required to be completed and returned to the Billings Fire Department after the fire watch has stopped. The log sheet also documents that the property or business owner is taking proactive measures to help ensure the building is safe while a fire protection system is out of service.

The responsibilities of fire watch personnel include: performing constant patrols of the premises to keep watch for fires, report all fires to the 911 Dispatch Center, maintain a means of communication with the 911 Dispatch Center, record actions during fire watch (every 60 minutes). Fire watch personnel must notify the 911 Dispatch Center at 657-8200 when the fire watch begins and ends.

The following impairment tags are mandatory and must be placed accordingly at each fire department connection, system control valve, fire alarm control unit, fire alarm annunciator and fire command center, indicating which system, or part thereof, has been removed from service. These tags may only be removed once the fire protection system has been returned to service.

A copy of this packet is available online at: <http://ci.billings.mt.us/457/Forms>

If you have any questions concerning the fire watch requirements, please contact the **Fire Prevention Bureau at (406) 657-8423.**

Updated: 03/22/2018

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FIRE WATCH LOG SHEET

NAME OF BUSINESS/BUILDING:	
BUSINESS/BUILDING ADDRESS:	
NAME OF IMPAIRMENT COORDINATOR:	
IMPAIRMENT COORDINATOR PHONE #:	
EXPECTED DURATION OF FIRE WATCH:	
PERSON CONDUCTING FIRE WATCH:	

DATE	TIME	INITIALS	ACTIONS
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**FIRE
SPRINKLER
OUT OF
SERVICE**

(Place sign at the Fire Department Connection)

**FIRE
SPRINKLER
OUT OF
SERVICE**

(Place sign at the System Control Valve)

**FIRE ALARM
SYSTEM
OUT OF
SERVICE**

(Place sign at the Fire Alarm Control Unit)

**FIRE ALARM
SYSTEM
OUT OF
SERVICE**

(Place sign at the Fire Alarm Annunciator)