

West Chester University
Department of Environmental Health and Safety

Fire Protection and Detection System Impairment Procedure

Purpose

To set forth the procedure to follow in the event of a fire protection or detection system shut down, isolation, or impairment

General

From time to time, circumstances may warrant the isolation of certain fire protection or detection features of university buildings. Such instances present an increased vulnerability to building occupants and structures in the event of a fire or other situation requiring the evacuation of a building's occupants and may also reduce the level of fire protection in the building(s) affected. The following procedure has been developed in order to minimize these risks and to insure the timely restoration of these systems

Procedure

In the event of a fire protection or detection system impairment in a university building, the following steps shall be taken:

- A. Sprinkler System – Unplanned Impairment
1. Determine upon arrival at the scene the extent to which the sprinkler or other protection system has been affected. (This is normally accomplished by the Public Safety Department).
 2. Determine the appropriate valve to isolate the problem and close the valve, making sure that only the zone control valve which will isolate the problem is closed.
 3. Notify the Fire Safety Specialist or designee.
 4. The Fire Safety Specialist or designee shall, through use of a red impairment tag, complete the necessary information and tag the equipment out of service. The appropriate vendor shall be contacted immediately to service the system. Facilities Planning and Construction shall also be notified at extension 2728.
 5. A fire watch with a fire extinguisher shall be posted in the affected area until the system is repaired and restored to service.

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6. Once repairs are made, the Fire Safety Specialist or designee shall verify that the valve has been opened (in person) along with confirming through Public safety that the supervisory alarm has cleared. Once verified, the impairment tag shall be removed.

Every attempt should be made to avoid closing any main control valve attached to a sprinkler system. Care shall be taken to isolate only the specific zone affected.

B. Sprinkler System – Planned Impairment

1. The Fire Safety Specialist or designee shall inspect the area of coverage to insure that any fire hazards are corrected prior to system impairment. Planned system impairment shall not commence before official notification is made to the university's Fire Safety Specialist.
2. In cooperation with the system vendor, the Fire Safety Specialist or designee shall close the appropriate zone control valve to isolate the section of the system affected. A red impairment tag shall be completed and attached to the valve.
3. The Fire Safety Specialist or designee shall notify the following departments:
 - a. Public Safety (x3311)
 - b. Facilities Planning and Construction (x2728)
 - c. Specific Facility Administrator
4. A fire watch with a fire extinguisher shall be posted throughout the time of system impairment. No hot work or any other work which has the potential for causing a fire shall be permitted in the affected area during the time of impairment.
5. Immediately upon completion of the work, the Fire Safety Specialist or designee shall open the zone control valve to restore protection to the affected area. The Fire Safety Specialist or designee shall verify the opening of the valve in person and through confirmation with Public Safety that the supervisory alarm has cleared. After the system is restored, the red impairment tag shall be removed and the Fire Safety Specialist shall notify Facilities Planning and Construction (x2728), and the specific Facility Administrator.

Every attempt should be made to avoid closing any main control valve attached to a sprinkler system. Care shall be taken to isolate only the specific zone affected.

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C. Fire Alarm System Impairment

1. In the event any portion of a fire alarm system must be placed out of service, the Fire Safety Specialist shall be notified at extension 2129.
2. The Fire Safety Specialist or designee shall notify the following departments:
 - a. Public Safety (x3311)
 - b. Facilities Planning and Construction (x2728)
 - c. Specific Facility Administrator
3. Any initiation device which has been affected shall be tagged clearly with a red impairment tag or labeled as such for the duration of the impairment.
4. The Facility Administrator shall, if necessary review plans for alternate notification of occupants in the event of an emergency.
5. Extreme care shall be taken to isolate only the zones absolutely necessary in order to maintain an appropriate level of protection.
6. As soon as possible, the fire alarm system shall be restored to full operation and the facility Administrator shall be notified of same.