

UA Fire Alarm Systems Policy

Unit: [Environmental Health and Safety](#)

Effective Date: 9/25/2019

Revision Date:

Contact: Tim Sullivan

Title: Fire Safety Manager

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the University is in compliance with the National Fire Alarm Code (NFPA 72), National Electrical Code (NFPA 70), International Fire Code, and NICET standards at all times, including situations where fire alarms must be temporarily disconnected or bypassed due to building maintenance, renovation, or special events. Any persons engaged in the acts of inspecting, testing, servicing, or programming a fire alarm system must meet all requirements of NFPA 72 section 10.5.3 as well as the State of Alabama Certified Fire Alarm Act.

Policy

The Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) has primary responsibility for campus fire safety and the management of building fire alarm systems. The University's Facilities and Grounds and Office of Information Technology departments also provide support related to the University's fire safety efforts. It is the goal of EHS to provide suitable fire safety protection while minimizing unwanted alarms. When situations arise that require fire alarms to be bypassed or altered to accommodate building maintenance, renovations, or other activities, EHS will coordinate with the individual or department in charge of the work or event to ensure that fire alarm systems are accessed only by properly qualified personnel and to ensure that fire safety concerns are addressed at all times.

The following requirements apply to any UA fire alarm system monitored by EHS or outside entity employed by UA to monitor campus fire alarm systems.

Before the Work or Activity Begins

Before any work and/or inspection begins, the individual responsible for the work must notify the EHS Fire Alarm Monitors by phone (205-348-0496). The following information must be communicated to EHS:

1. Contact information for someone who will remain onsite while the work is performed.
2. Whether or not an alarm response needs to continue. For instance, if only sprinkler devices are being bypassed then the response should continue for the other components of the fire alarm system.
3. Whether or not an EHS fire alarm technician is needed to bypass devices in the area of work.

During the Work or Activity

If a fire alarm system is taken offline or its occupant notification is disabled, properly qualified personnel must be continuously stationed onsite at the fire alarm control panel. However, when devices are bypassed only for a specific area or only limited components are taken offline, personnel may not be required to remain at the fire alarm panel. EHS will assist in determining if personnel are required prior to work beginning.

1. Should a fire alarm, not caused directly by the work being performed, occur outside of the area of work, The University of Alabama Police Department (UAPD) must be notified immediately by calling 348-5454, and the fire alarm system should be taken out of test/service mode. All personnel should evacuate the building. Personnel operating the fire alarm systems should remain outside but onsite and be available for first responder inquiries.

2. Before leaving the building, the personnel conducting inspections or work on the fire alarm system, must notify EHS that all work is complete, and the system is restored to normal operations.
3. When properly qualified personnel leave the building, the fire alarm system should be in the same condition it was in upon arrival. If not, an explanation shall be reported to EHS before leaving the building.
4. If the fire alarm system is impaired by the work for an extended period, a fire watch may be necessary. This includes any demolition work that has inadvertently impaired the fire alarm system.

Special Events

If there is need to bypass fire detection for a special event (for example, when fog machines or other special effects are used), it is necessary for event planners/building representatives to contact EHS a minimum of 24 hours prior to the event so that suitable arrangements can be made. These types of events may require additional technical support, which may result in added costs.

Evacuation

When a fire alarm occurs, all building occupants must immediately evacuate the building and not re-enter until advised to do so by UAPD, Tuscaloosa Fire Department or EHS.

Resetting a Fire Alarm System

When a fire alarm occurs, the system should only be reset by UAPD, once the determination is made that there is no fire, or the fire is out. If the system is unable to be re-set, EHS must be called for assistance.

Enforcement

Failure to comply with the requirements specified in this policy may result in disciplinary actions for the individual or expose the University to fines. Involved parties may also be billed for repairs to damaged components.

Definitions

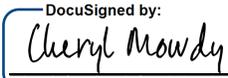
Fire Watch: A Fire Watch is a physical inspection conducted when a building's Fire Alarm, Sprinkler or other Suppression Systems are hindered or temporarily out of service. Fire Watch Personnel are required to continually patrol the facility or site for evidence of smoke, fire or any abnormal conditions. Whenever a situation that threatens life or property is discovered, the Fire Watch personnel must immediately contact emergency personnel, sound the fire alarm, alert the building occupants and assist in the orderly evacuation of the facility.

Properly Qualified Personnel: Individuals meeting the requirements of NFPA 72 10.5.3 and the State of Alabama Certified Fire Alarm Act. This includes those who are at least NICET level II certified in Fire Protection or working directly under the supervision of someone who is. At The University of Alabama this would be limited to licensed fire alarm technicians (EHS), licensed fire sprinkler technicians (Facilities-Plumbing), or a licensed fire alarm contractors.

Scope

This policy applies to all areas and departments who request access to a campus fire alarm system.

Office of the Vice President of Finance and Operations

Signed:  9/25/2019
Cheryl Mowdy
Assistant Vice President for Finance and Operations