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**SUNY CORTLAND
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
AND SAFETY OFFICE**

FIRE WATCH PROGRAM

PROGRAMS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES

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Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. References.....	1
3. Responsibilities.....	1
4. Program Requirements and Guidelines.....	2
4.1 Hot Work.....	3
4.2 Building Fire Watch	3
Appendix A - Areas and Activities Exempt from Hot Work Permits	5
Appendix B - SUNY Cortland Fire Watch Log.....	6

Fire Watch Program

1. Introduction

Requirements and responsibilities for executing a fire watch are outlined in this document. Persons having administrative responsibilities for implementing a fire watch and building occupants must observe relevant fire watch and building evacuation requirements. All questions and concerns regarding the implementation of this program should be directed to the Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) Office at (607) 753-2508 or x2508. Deviations from the requirements outlined in this policy require approval from the EH&S Office.

2. References

- Fire Code of New York State, Chapters 9 and 26
- NFPA 101 – Life Safety Code
- SUNY Cortland’s Emergency Action Plans
- SUNY Cortland’s Hot Work Program

3. Responsibilities

Building Administrators – Building Administrators will inform building occupants about fire watch events and building evacuations.

Contractors – Term contractors must observe safe work practices as outlined in SUNY Cortland’s Hot Work Program. Contractors under New York State University Construction Fund and Dormitory Authority State of New York projects are expected to implement safe hot work and fire watch practices consistent with agency-specific protocol. Campus expectations involving a fire watch and hot work will be conveyed to contractors through the campus’ Facilities Planning, Design and Construction Office.

EH&S Office – The EH&S Office has primary administrative oversight for SUNY Cortland’s Fire Watch Program. The decision to implement a fire watch will be determined by the EH&S Office in consultation with the following offices and titles:

- 1) Facilities Operations and Services;
- 2) University Police;
- 3) Facilities, Planning, Design and Construction; and
- 4) Code Enforcement Officials.

Whenever a decision is made to execute a building fire watch, the EH&S Office will contact Building Administrators and other affected offices to convey appropriate instructions. EH&S Office personnel will also provide Emergency Action Plans and other relevant safety training to fire watch personnel.

Employees – Employees are responsible for observing protocol as outlined in SUNY Cortland’s Emergency Action Plans.

Facilities Operations and Services – Facilities Operations and Services personnel will promptly contact the EH&S Office, University Police Department, the local fire department, and the code enforcement official when a building fire alarm or sprinkler system is, or will be, out of service. Facilities Operations and Services personnel will also assist with fire watch decisions and implementing a fire watch, and will contact the local fire department about fire watch arrangements. For emergencies and other specified situations, the EH&S Office will delegate fire watch and hot work responsibilities to Facilities Operations and Services personnel. In these instances, Facilities Operations and Services personnel will be responsible for implementing safe fire watch and hot work practices.

Facilities Planning, Design and Construction (FPD&C) Office – The FPD&C Office will assist with fire watch decisions. Additionally, FPD&C Office employees will contact the EH&S Office to obtain hot work permits for term contractors and convey to contractors campus expectations for a fire watch and hot work.

Fire Watch Personnel – Fire watch personnel are responsible for observing safe work practices as outlined in SUNY Cortland’s Emergency Action Plans and Hot Work Programs. Fire watch personnel are also responsible for executing duties that are specified during fire watch training.

Residence Life and Housing Office – Residence Life and Housing personnel will assist with informing dormitory Building Administrators about fire watch events and building evacuations.

University Police Department (UPD) – UPD will assist with:

- 1) Fire watch decisions;
- 2) Contacting the local fire department when a building fire alarm or sprinkler system is or will be out of service;
- 3) Contacting the local fire department about fire watch arrangements; and
- 4) Emergencies involving fires.

4. Program Requirements and Guidelines

Requirements for a fire watch and hot work are outlined in this section. A fire watch is a provision for patrolling an area or building for fires. At least one person will be assigned to a fire watch; however, when fire exposures are not observable by just one individual, fire watch responsibilities will be assigned to additional personnel. Individuals assigned to a fire watch will be trained in accordance with SUNY Cortland’s Emergency Action Plans. This training includes:

- 1) Hazard recognition;
- 2) Location of pull stations;
- 3) Contact numbers for emergencies;
- 4) Use of portable fire extinguishers;
- 5) Procedures for evacuating a building; and
- 6) Other relevant safe work practices.

4.1 Hot Work

Hot work includes welding, cutting, brazing, certain soldering and grinding operations, and instances where an open flame is used. Requirements and guidelines for hot work are outlined in SUNY Cortland's Hot Work Program.

A fire watch is required for all hot work activities and must continue for a minimum of 30 minutes after the conclusion of work. If fire hazards merit special consideration, the fire watch might be extended. The duration of a fire watch will be specified on hot work permits. It is noteworthy to mention that a hot work permit might not be required for all hot work. Areas and activities that are exempt from hot work permit requirements are listed in Appendix A.

Fire watch personnel should remain vigilant during the fire watch. For hot work activities that occur indoors, persons assigned to the fire watch must immediately activate the nearest pull station if a fire occurs. If the fire is small, an attempt should be made to put out the fire by using a designated fire extinguisher. Once the fire is out, fire watch personnel should exit the building and go to the assembly space for the building. Assembly spaces for each campus building are listed in SUNY Cortland's Emergency Action Plans. If a fire is large, fire watch personnel should immediately exit the building and go to the assembly space after activating the nearest pull station. Fire watch personnel should be prepared to report the location of the fire to emergency response personnel.

For a small fire involving hot work that occurs outdoors, fire watch personnel should attempt to put out the fire by using a designated fire extinguisher. Once the fire is out, fire watch personnel should call 2111 or 911 from a campus phone or (607) 753-2111 from non-campus phone). After the call is made, fire watch personnel and others should stay a safe distance away from the area where the fire occurred and remain vigilant until emergency response personnel arrive. Fire watch personnel should not attempt to put out large fires for hot work that occurs outdoors. For large fires, a call to 2111 or 911 from a campus phone or (607) 753-2111 from non-campus phone should be made immediately and fire watch personnel and others should remain a safe distance away from the fire.

4.2 Building Fire Watch

The decision to implement a building fire watch is contingent on whether or not a building's fire alarm or sprinkler system is in service. When a building fire alarm or sprinkler system is out of service, the EH&S Office, UPD, the local fire department, and the campus code enforcement official should be contacted first. Thereafter, a fire watch will be established and a decision will be made regarding if the occupants of a building will be evacuated. In instances where there is not a substantial risk to life safety or where alternative methods for maintaining an equivalent level of safety are prescribed, a fire watch can be waived; however, this decision is made by the code enforcement official in consultation with the EH&S Office.

Building Administrators will be contacted prior to:

- 1) A fire watch; and/or
- 2) Evacuating the occupants of a building.

The Building Administrator will be requested to inform the occupants of the building about actions that will be taken.

Personnel assigned to a fire watch are provided with a communications device, a means of alerting building occupants, and a Fire Watch Log (see Appendix B). Fire watch personnel should remain vigilant during the fire watch. Buildings or affected areas should be patrolled at least once per hour. Activities related to the fire watch should be recorded on the Fire Watch Log. If fire or smoke related emergencies occur, the following protocol should be observed by fire watch personnel:

1. UPD should be contacted by calling 2111 or 911 (when using a campus phone) and the building occupants alerted to immediately evacuate the building.

Note: (607) 753-2111 should be called when using a non-campus phone); and

2. For situations where the fire alarm is operable, but the sprinkler system is out of service, fire watch personnel may activate a pull station to initiate a building evacuation.

After the building is evacuated, building occupants and fire watch personnel should go to the assembly space. Assembly spaces for each campus building are listed in SUNY Cortland's Emergency Action Plan. Fire watch personnel should be prepared to report the location of the fire to emergency response personnel.

At the end of the fire watch, the Fire Watch Log should be sent to the EH&S Office.

Appendix A - Areas and Activities Exempt from Hot Work Permits

Area or Activity	Stipulations
Art Department – Includes Old Main and annex the west side of the Professional Studies Building	A hot work permit must be obtained for hot work activities outside of these specified areas.
Campus emergencies	Safe work practices outlined in this program must be observed.
Campus Technology Services – Sperry, Rooms 317, 318, and 319	A hot work permit must be obtained for hot work activities outside of these areas.
HVAC	A hot work permit must be obtained for soldering within hallways and office areas. Additionally, a permit must be obtained for welding, cutting, and brazing activities outside of the trade shop.
Maintenance Trade Shop	A hot work permit must be obtained for soldering within hallways and office areas. Additionally, a permit must be obtained for welding, cutting, and brazing activities outside of the trade shop.
Performing Arts Department – Includes Scene Shop and stage area	A hot work permit must be obtained for hot work activities outside of the specified areas.
Property that is not owned by the State	A hot work permit must be obtained.
Science Departments	A hot work permit is not required for Bunsen burners and small propane torches.
State University Construction Fund (SUCF) and Dormitory Authority State of New York (DASNY) construction projects	SUCF and DASNY projects must comply with agency-specific procedures.

Appendix B - SUNY Cortland Fire Watch Log

This log is to be used to record building fire watch activities. Personnel conducting the fire watch should remain vigilant and buildings or affected areas should be patrolled at least once per hour. The “notes” column of this log should be used to record fires, building evacuations and other activities that are observed during the fire watch. Please use additional pages for a fire watch lasting more than one day.

In the event of a fire, call 2111 or 911 from a campus phone and alert the building occupants to evacuate the building (Note: (607) 753-2111 should be called when using a non-campus phone).

At the end of the fire watch, this log should be sent to the Environmental Health and Safety Office.

Reason(s) for fire watch: _____

Date: _____

Building: _____

Person(s) conducting the fire watch: _____

Time	Initials	Notes
12:00 am		
1:00 am		
2:00 am		
3:00 am		
4:00 am		
5:00 am		
6:00 am		
7:00 am		
8:00 am		
9:00 am		
10:00 am		
11:00 am		
12:00 pm		
1:00 pm		
2:00 pm		
3:00 pm		
4:00 pm		
5:00 pm		
6:00 pm		
7:00 pm		
8:00 pm		
9:00 pm		
10:00 pm		
11:00 pm		

