

Automatic Fire Sprinkler System Impairment Procedure Guide

Fire protection impairment handling is a critical aspect of any loss control program. In today's business environment many companies operate with fewer employees and those employees have taken on numerous job responsibilities. A written procedure outlining impairment handling is critical to ongoing operations. Fire protection impairments can include routine maintenance, facility additions, losses or other events.

Impairments occur when any protective equipment is taken either totally or partially out of service. When this happens, the property is left unprotected and exposed to a potentially severe loss. Many large fire losses occur during periods of impaired protection based on the fact that the protection has no chance of functioning as designed. It becomes extremely important to develop proper impairment handling procedures to hopefully ensure the continued normal operation of the facility.

Impairment handling tags, which serve as a visual reminder of the impairment can be obtained from your local Loss Control Office or Consultant.

Written fire protection impairments procedures should include the following for both business and non-business hours:

Impairment of Fire Protection Systems

- Know the length of time the fire protection impairment will last.
- Fire sprinkler installation repair or tie-in work should be continuous.
- Provide a fire watch equipped with radios or cell phones.
- Properly rated fire extinguishers should be readily available.
- Stop all hazardous operations in the area of the sprinkler impairment.
- Institute a hot work permit system (if needed) and restrict smoking.
- Remove or protect all combustible materials in the area of the impairment.
- Notify all department heads and other tenants of the impairment and the must call "911" telephone alert status.
- Contact the alarm service if applicable and the local fire department.
- Notify your insurance agent if the impairment is MORE than 8 hours.
- Institute your "Lock out and Tag-out" program per OSHA 29 CFR 1910.147

Restoration of Fire Protection Systems

- (As needed) Blow-test, then air test all new sprinkler pipe and attachments.
- (As needed) Hydrostatically test and document all sprinkler pipe and attachments.
- Confirm the full restoration of fire sprinkler systems, fire alarm evacuation systems, and alarm service before the end of the workday or that proper precautions are in place if the impairment goes past normal working hours.

LOSS CONTROL TIPS

- Conduct a documented full flow 2-inch drain test; tamper test, and alarm test on all previously impaired fire sprinkler systems.
- Notify Fire Department of restoration of fire sprinkler and fire alarm service.
- (If needed) Notify your insurance agent of restoration of sprinkler protection.

For more information, contact your local Hartford agent or your Hartford Loss Control Consultant. Visit The Hartford's Loss Control web site at <http://www.thehartford.com/corporate/losscontrol/>

The following are examples of steps that could be taken to reduce either the frequency or severity of an impairment:

- New piping should be laid out to the greatest extent possible before impairing any protection.
- Isolate as little fire protection as needed to complete the work.
- Sprinkler systems can be back fed from yard hydrants through the 2 in. drain piping.
- Work efficiently and continuously.
- Work on only one fire protection system at a time.
- Have a confirmation of restoration or pre-emergency plan in place before the end of the shift or workday.

Proper impairment handling procedures are crucial to the ongoing business operations at any facility. These rare events can have devastating effects if not properly handled.

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