



July 8, 2026

From: Child Care Licensing, Fire & Life Safety

RE: DSS Child Care Fire & Life Safety Fire Watch instructions for Non-functional Fire Alarm Systems

For compliance with the International Fire Code with SC Modifications (2021) section 901.7; whenever a **required** fire alarm system is out of service (broken or non-functional), the facility owner or occupant shall enact the following Fire Watch procedures **or** close the Child Care facility until system returns to working order.

1. Shall designate personnel to serve as a fire watch for the facility until the alarm system returns to service working order.
2. The fire watch personnel shall consist of at least:
 - a. One person per building,
 - b. One person per floor in multistory buildings, and
 - c. One person per fire area in buildings subdivided with firewalls
3. The fire watch personnel shall have the primary duty of fire watch. They must patrol their area and not leave their area unless relieved by other personnel.
4. The fire watch personnel shall have communications, such as radios or cell phones to communicate to each other and the fire department (911).
5. The fire watch personnel shall have a way of sounding an alarm, for example, air horns or whistles.
6. The facility shall conduct daily fire drills until the fire alarm system returns to working order.
7. The facility shall keep written records of all fire drills per International Fire Code, using the standard form.
8. Notify staff, employees, students, and visitors daily of the fire watch and fire drill procedures explaining the need for increased awareness from all.

If the fire alarm system can not be returned working order within 15 calendar days, the facility owner or occupant shall contact DSS Fire & Health Safety for further instructions at 803-898-9020.