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I. **Purpose:**

This policy applies to scheduled projects in existing buildings during which a building fire alarm system will be disconnected, by-passed or compromised. Adherence to the steps listed below will assure that the proper consideration has been given to the protection of life and property in such situations.

II. **Scope:**

All buildings on the Villanova University campus including the main, west and south campuses and the administration buildings located on the south side of Lancaster Avenue. Note: This scope excludes The Inn at Villanova which is subject to a separate Building Fire Alarm policy.

III. **Definitions**

**Approved Fire Watch**: An approved fire watch is a dedicated person, or persons, whose sole responsibility is to look for fire and other hazards within a building, specific area, or premises. A fire watch is a temporary measure for the purpose of ensuring the fire safety of a building or premises. A fire watch is required under the following circumstances:

- When the building’s fire alarm system or sprinkler system will be out of service for four (4) or more hours in a 24 hour period.
- When “hot work” operations (i.e., welding, cutting, burning) are being performed in a building.
- When in the opinion of the Environmental Health & Safety Director, it is essential for the safety of the building occupants.
- Hot Work requires that a fire watch last throughout the duration of the operation and at least 30 minutes after the conclusion of work.

**Impairment**: An impairment of any fire protection system or equipment occurs when that protection system, alarm or detection device is removed from service either partially or completely.

**Major Impairment**: Impairment lasting greater than eight hours in duration or affecting more than one fire protection system.

**Minor Impairment**: Impairment lasting less than eight hours in duration and affecting not more than one fire protection system.

**Project Manager**: The designated Villanova University Project Manager or another University contact designated to coordinate project activities on behalf of Villanova University.
IV. Policy Statement
The University recognizes that there are instances in which a building fire alarm must be deactivated during a construction or remodeling project. In such instances, it is the policy of the University to protect University personnel who remain in a building in which the building fire alarm has been deactivated. This goal is achieved through the application of appropriate engineering and administrative controls.

V. Procedures:

A. The Project Manager shall notify by email the following parties of the planned deactivation or shut-down of a building fire alarm systems: Office of Environmental Health & Safety, Facilities Management, Insurance and Risk Management, Public Safety, Office of Residence Life (if appropriate) and the occupants of the affected building(s). Notification must include the extent and duration of the planned deactivation or shut down. A notice similarly worded to Attachment A shall be posted in the affected building(s).

B. Before authorization is given, the Project Manager must verify that the following issues have been addressed:
   1. Procedures for emergency evacuation of the building or portion of the building affected by the alarm deactivation in accordance with the University evacuation procedures.
   2. Implementation of an approved fire watch.
   3. Deactivation has been planned to minimize the extent and duration including planning for any reasonably unanticipated issues that may arise.
   4. Areas or buildings involved have been inspected and an assessment of the increased risk has been determined.
   5. The Bryn Mawr Fire Department has been notified in advance of the planned deactivation.
   6. The Project Engineer has provided to the Office of Insurance and Risk Management the following information in writing:
      a. The name, function and telephone number of the party requesting the deactivation.
      b. The reason for the deactivation.
      c. The name of the building(s) where the system will be deactivated.
      d. The time and date that the deactivation will begin.
      e. The anticipated time and date that the system is expected to be returned to normal.

Then and only then, the Facilities Management Department shall respond to a request to deactivate the building alarm system from the Project Manager.
C. To prevent inadvertent activation of the fire alarm system when welding/burning operations are taking place in buildings that will remain partially occupied, Facilities Management will deactivate and subsequently reactivate the appropriate zone(s) of the fire alarm system as directed by the Project Manager. Facilities Management will provide advance notice to the Public Safety Department of all planned deactivations and reactivations of fire alarm zones.

D. The Project Manager shall assure that all contractors involved in welding/burning operations strictly adhere to Villanova’s Hot Works Procedure (see EH&S Policy S15). Burning/Welding/Hot Works permits can be obtained from the Office of Environmental Health & Safety or the Facilities Work Control Coordinator.

E. If the building in which the deactivation occurs will remain partially occupied and the alarm system will be deactivated beyond three consecutive work shifts for the main contractor, the following additional steps shall be taken:

1. The occupied portion of the building shall be separated from the construction area by a wall having a two-hour fire rating.

2. The entrance door to the construction area shall also be fire rated at two hours and shall be equipped with a window that allows a clear view of the majority of the construction area.

3. A heat detector shall be located on the construction side of the door and in close proximity to the door. The detector shall be temporarily wired into the portion of the alarm system that remains active.

4. The Public Safety Department shall commit sufficient manpower to assure that the unoccupied portion of the building is monitored at one half hour intervals during non-working hours for the main contractor. The Project Manager will notify Public Safety of any scheduled non-emergency deactivations at least 10 days before the deactivation. Additionally, the Project Manager will provide a charge number to Public Safety similarly worded to Attachment B.

5. The main contractor shall assure that sufficient manpower is committed to monitor any unoccupied building(s) in a construction mode during the deactivation.

6. If the project involves the creation of excessive dust, the Project Manager shall assure that the demolition contractor cover the smoke heads before the demolition phase begins. It will be the contractor’s responsibility to remove any such covers utilized before the fire alarm system is reactivated.
7. If a fire alarm system deactivation is planned for an area in which chemical, biological or physical hazards are present, the building occupants in concert with the Office of Environmental Health & Safety, shall assure that alternative safeguards are provided to protect against these hazards before the fire alarm system is deactivated.

8. All fire protection equipment shall be returned to its normal state as promptly as possible. At the completion of the project, Facilities Management and Public Safety shall conduct a system check to assure that all fire protection components are functioning as intended. Written documentation of this system check must be provided to the Office of Environmental Health & Safety with a courtesy copy to the Office of Insurance and Risk Management.

9. Upon notification from the Project Engineer of a planned alarm system deactivation, the Office of Risk Management and Insurance shall notify the Villanova University insurance carrier of the impending impairment. The following information is required by the University’s insurance carrier, and therefore must be communicated to the Office of Risk Management and Insurance by the Project Engineer:
   a. The name, function and telephone number of the party requesting the deactivation.
   b. The reason for the deactivation.
   c. The name of the building(s) where the system will be deactivated.
   d. The time and date that the deactivation will begin.
   e. The anticipated time and date that the system is expected to be returned to normal.

VI. Policy Evaluation
This policy shall be jointly evaluated bi-annually by the Assistant VP of Engineering and Construction and the Director of Maintenance. The evaluation will be chaired by the Director, Environmental Health & Safety.

VII. Related Information:
Villanova University Consensus best practice

VIII. History
Issued: 4-20-99
Revised: 11-03, 12-09, 09-11, 5-13, 9-15, 5-18
IX. Responsible University Division Department

Vice President  
Facilities Management Office  
800 Lancaster Avenue  
Villanova, PA 19085  
610-519-4589

X. Responsible Administrative Oversight

Executive Vice President  
Office of the Executive Vice President  
800 Lancaster Avenue  
Villanova, PA 19085  
610-519-4530
Attachment A

Notice

The Facilities Management Office has scheduled construction work in (insert building name) that will disable the building’s fire alarm system. Effective (insert date), the building fire alarm system will be (demolished, repaired, reconstructed, deactivated or other appropriate phrase). The Office of Environmental Health & Safety, Facilities Services and Public Safety have taken alternative steps to protect the building and its occupants during this period of time.

This notice shall remain in effect until further notice.

cc : A. Lenthe  
     D. Tedjeske  
     R. Morro  
     N. Grosso  
     R. Gens  
     Other  
     Bldg Posted (Date)
Inter-Office Memo

To: D. Tedeske, Director, Public Safety
From: Name (Project Engineer)
cc: N. Grosso, R. Morro,

Date: 

Subject: Fire Alarm Deactivation

The fire alarm system will be deactivated in selected zones in (building name) from (insert time) to (insert time) on (insert date). Please assure that the Public Safety Department conducts checks of the construction area at one half hour intervals during the above referenced time.

To avoid an exposure to construction related hazards, Public Safety Officers should not enter the active construction area. An observation window has been provided at the entrance to the construction site for monitoring purposes.

Charge account number (insert account number) for Public Safety activities related to this request.

Note: For scheduled non-emergency deactivations, this notice must be sent to Public Safety at least 10 days before the deactivation.