Policy

It shall be the policy of the University of Tennessee (UT) to abide by applicable fire safety standards. One such standard requires notification of the local fire department and the UT property insurance carrier when a fire protection system is incapable of performing as designed.

Definitions

**Fire Protection System** applies to the following systems

1. Fire alarm systems, including all/any detection.
2. Automatic fire suppression system (sprinkler) including fire pumps
3. Standpipe systems
4. Local flooding/suppression systems
5. Fire hydrants

Note: Does not include portable fire extinguishers

**Impairment** - Any condition that would prevent a system from operating as designed or creates an unsafe condition. Examples include: valves being closed, no power to a fire pump, or significant loss of water pressure. The term does not apply to minor system conditions that would not affect system performance.

Notification

Any employee who is aware of a fire protection system impairment is authorized to contact Facilities Services or Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) to report this condition. When an impairment is expected to last more than four hour (continuous), EHS shall contact the Knoxville Fire Department (KFD) Dispatch (215-2670) and provide appropriate details (building, type of system, expected length of impairment, person making the call, etc.). In addition, the UT property insurance carrier shall be notified using the forms provided. The “Fire Protection Out of Service” tag shall be displayed at the site of impairment (valve, control panel, hydrant, etc.).
When the impairment is anticipated to last more than four hours, EHS shall notify building occupants. This notification may involve working with the building representative posting signs in the building or e-mails to building occupants. When the outage is expected to last more than two days EHS will assess the need for additional controls (e.g. interim life safety plan).

Tagging and Sign

Tags (aka red tags) shall be posted at the site of the impairment. Examples of the site include, but are not limited to:

1. Valve
2. Pump
3. Switch
4. Breaker
5. Hydrants
6. Fire alarm panel
7. Fire pump panel

Note that hydrants shall be covered with black plastic bags in accordance with Knoxville Fire Department protocol.

Safety Precautions During Impairment

The following activities shall be control in areas where an impairment has occurred:

1. Smoking shall be strictly prohibited
2. Additional portable fire extinguishers may be necessary
3. Combustible and flammable materials may require additional controls
4. Hot work shall be prohibited or strictly monitored
5. Periodic surveillance by EHS, building occupants, UT Police or Facilities Services personnel
6. Other controls as deemed necessary to prevent a fire hazard or permit rapid fire detection and
7. occupant evaluation

Restoration of Fire Protection System

The responsible party (contractor, or personnel from Facilities Services) shall notify EHS when the system is restored to operation. EHS shall then contact the KFD dispatch and the UT
property insurance carrier to provide an update. The tag shall be removed from the point of impairment and a record maintained of the impairment in the EHS files.

**Training and Information**

EHS shall provide information to Facilities Services personnel who are responsible for fire protection systems. Starting in 2009 EHS shall post tags or signs at sites where an impairment could occur.

**Recordkeeping**

EHS shall maintain the records of impairment and any interim life safety plans for three years.

**Standards**

NFPA 25

**Forms**

Fire Protection Impairment Handout