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THE WATCHMAN

**A Recommended Manual of Instruction and
Duties for the Plant Watchman
or Guard**

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*Thirty-five Cents**

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NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION
International

60 Batterymarch Street, Boston 10, Mass.

National Fire Protection Association International

Executive Office: 60 Batterymarch St., Boston 10, Mass.

The National Fire Protection Association was organized in 1896 to promote the science and improve the methods of fire protection and prevention, to obtain and circulate information on these subjects and to secure the cooperation of its members in establishing proper safeguards against loss of life and property by fire. Its membership includes nearly two hundred national and regional societies and associations (list on outside back cover) and more than sixteen thousand individuals, corporations, and organizations. Anyone interested may become a member; membership information is available on request.

This pamphlet is one of a large number of publications on fire safety issued by the Association including periodicals, books, posters and other publications; a complete list is available without charge on request. All NFPA standards adopted by the Association are published in six volumes of the **National Fire Codes** which are re-issued annually and which are available on an annual subscription basis. The standards, prepared by the technical committees of the National Fire Protection Association and adopted in the annual meetings of the Association, are intended to prescribe reasonable measures for minimizing losses of life and property by fire. All interests concerned have opportunity through the Association to participate in the development of the standards and to secure impartial consideration of matters affecting them.

NFPA standards are purely advisory as far as the Association is concerned, but are widely used by law enforcing authorities in addition to their general use as guides to fire safety.

Definitions

The official NFPA definitions of shall, should and approved are:

SHALL is intended to indicate requirements.

SHOULD is intended to indicate recommendations, or that which is advised but not required.

APPROVED refers to approval by the authority having jurisdiction.

Units of measurements used here are U. S. standard. 1 U. S. gallon = 0.83 Imperial gallons = 3.785 liters.

Approved Equipment

The National Fire Protection Association does not "approve" individual items of fire protection equipment, materials or services. The standards are prepared, as far as practicable, in terms of required performance, avoiding specifications of materials, devices or methods so phrased as to preclude obtaining the desired results by other means. The suitability of devices and materials for installation under these standards is indicated by the listings of nationally recognized testing laboratories, whose findings are customarily used as a guide to approval by agencies applying these standards. Underwriters' Laboratories, Inc., Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada and the Factory Mutual Laboratories test devices and materials for use in accordance with the appropriate standards, and publish lists which are available on request.

The Watchman

NFPA No. 601 — 1956

This text, prepared by the Committee on Fire Brigades and Watchmen, was adopted by the National Fire Protection Association on June 7, 1956. It supersedes all previous pamphlets by the same title issued by the NFPA prior to 1956. The official record of NFPA action will be found in the Advance Reports and Proceedings.

This text dates from 1925 when the NFPA Committee on Field Practice presented a set of advisory rules called *The Watchman, Suggestions for Guidance in his Selection, Instruction and Duties*. These suggestions were adopted and published by the NFPA in 1925 and reprinted in 1949. In 1948 the Committee on Field Practice was discontinued and responsibility for preparing a revised edition of "The Watchman" was given to the Committee on Fire Brigades and Watchmen.

Revisions Adopted in 1956

Changes were made in Article 12 to provide a more lenient treatment of the rounds to be made by the watchman. For example, rounds may be omitted at nights in portions of a plant under continuous operation provided that watchman's facilities are available for use when such continuous operations are suspended. Changes were also made to provide for rounds at more frequent intervals than the customary hourly rounds in some properties with extra hazardous or unusual hazards.

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A Recommended Manual of Instructions and Duties for The Plant Watchman or Guard

1. Purpose

11. This manual is designed to furnish a guide to plant management and watchmen or guards charged with the responsibility of protecting property.

12. While the information contained herein is general in scope, it is a pattern to be followed. It should be realized that the successful protection of property requires a thorough understanding of local problems and conditions.

2. Introduction

21. The term "watchman" is used throughout this manual, but some plant managements may prefer to use some other term such as "guard." Any such term may be substituted, if desired, as the text will apply equally as well.

22. In this pamphlet, it is not the intention to direct every thought and action of the watchman. Rather, it is to guide him in the proper and efficient administration of approved policies governing property protection.

23. It is not a matter of luck that many industrial operations, whether large or small, have enjoyed immunity from serious fire losses, but it is the result of careful planning which indicates that the plant has trained personnel to protect property against fire loss.

24. Competent watchman service is an important part of any plant organization. It is necessary that men employed as watchmen be men of ability who have keen powers of observation. They should be loyal and courageous, possess good personalities and self-control, be reliable, and have keen interest in their work.

25. The watchman should be concerned with the identification of all persons entering and leaving the plant; fire, theft, and accident prevention; air, water, oil, gas or steam leaks; power and light, waste, property damage, house-keeping, violation of shop rules, control of traffic and other matters peculiar to the property being protected.

26. It should be understood that, because of the difference in character of the properties, available fire protection

facilities, and other peculiarities, the information and instructions outlined suggest only a pattern to be followed.

3. Management-minded

31. The watchman's value to management and his desire to make his work interesting and become worthy of the trust management has placed in him depend upon his efficiency and knowledge of his work.

32. The watchman should be management-minded in employee contacts. He should remember that he is a direct representative of management and will be contacted frequently for various types of information. In giving information, he should be certain that it is accurate and he should correct false rumors when they appear. Management should be advised of any irregularities.

4. Selecting the Watchman

41. It is of utmost importance to select competent men to fill the position of watchman. In order for a watchman to assume the responsibilities and related duties required of him, he should be instructed fully and supported thoroughly. Each plant should draw up a set of qualifications and requirements to be used in selecting watchmen personnel.

42. The following is a list of suggested points to be considered:

- a. A very young man or extremely aged man should not be employed. A very young man, ordinarily, has not acquired judgment and a sense of responsibility. An extremely aged man is not likely to be alert or to have the requisite physical strength and endurance.
- b. He should be of medium height.
- c. He should be of medium weight. Height and weight should be in relation to each other as short, fat men or tall, thin men usually do not "fill the bill" as well as men who are of good build.
- d. The man should be in good physical condition. He does not need to be an athlete, but neither should he have a heart condition or other physical ailment which might work to his disadvantage in moments of stress.
- e. The watchman should have a high school education or its equivalent.

- f. He should be a citizen of the country.
- g. He should have no police record and should be of good character.
- h. His maximum age for active service, ordinarily, should be not more than 60, although this age limit may be exceeded in exceptional cases.
- i. A new watchman should be placed on probation for a period of about six months, after which time he should be required to pass a written examination before he is given a final appointment.

43. There are two more important points which should not be overlooked or neglected:

- a. The watchman should be given an annual physical examination. He might be perfectly sound and able when he is employed, but he might not remain so.
- b. He should be given an annual written examination on pertinent facts and information. He should keep himself well informed and should not be allowed to deteriorate into just a clock puncher.

5. Character and Appearance

51. Character, habits and reliability of the watchman must be unquestioned. He should never smoke while making a round, but may be permitted to smoke at a specified place during his rest period. Proper ash receptacles should be provided for disposal of discarded smoking materials. Good appearance is a most desirable quality. A clean-shaven, neat-appearing watchman creates respect from others, which is a great help in the performance of duties.

6. Courtesy and Self-control

61. Courtesy and self-control are absolute requirements and always should be practiced in contacting fellow employees and the public. The watchman should be firm, calm and, above all, courteous, both in the enforcing of company rules and in the ordinary performance of his duty. Whatever the assignment may be, he should do his work as instructed, protect the employees' and the plant properties, and do it in a pleasant and courteous manner. Such behavior is an expression of respect and it is something the management expects of every watchman, even in a difficult or trying situation.

7. Number of Watchmen Required

71. Adequate protection requires complete coverage of all plant property. Due to wage and hour laws, it is almost impossible for a plant to employ only one watchman, especially when the plant must be patrolled from 6:00 P.M. to 6:00 A.M. or for a period of twelve hours a night. Most watchmen will be on duty for an eight-hour shift and must be relieved for the remaining four hours. There also must be separate watchmen for the daytime shifts on Sundays, holidays and at other times when the plant is not in full operation. Enough watchmen should be provided so that each man can cover his assigned route in forty minutes, allowing ample time to check valves, windows, doors, lights, etc.

72. Constant walking for more than forty minutes at any one time will result in excessive fatigue and lower efficiency over an eight-hour period. The interval between rounds may be utilized for performing other related duties or for rest.

73. It is not good judgment to increase the area covered by a watchman beyond that which he can patrol reasonably in forty minutes by cutting down his rest period or by omitting any building or room from his route. Additional watchmen may be required.

74. Where two or more watchmen are employed, one should be appointed as supervisor.

75. Watchmen should not begin their rounds at the same time or finish together for the rest period.

76. Routes should be scheduled so that rest periods will be separated; thus, insuring maximum protection.

77. When there are two or more watchmen, each route should be patrolled continuously by the same man, who will be held responsible for anything that occurs on his assigned route during his shift. This is preferable to the plan of alternating every other round. However, it is desirable to alternate the men every other night so that they will be familiar with all parts of the plant.

78. Where there is no supervisory or central control system and there are two or more watchmen on duty, or a single watchman and an attendant on duty in some location such as in a boiler house, pump house, etc., it is good practice

to adopt a plan whereby the watchmen check with each other, or with an attendant on duty on every round so that in case of sickness or accident an investigation may be made and help obtained.

8. The Watchman's Duties

81. It should be understood thoroughly that the watchman on duty may be sole custodian of the property for much of the time and will be held responsible for any occurrence within his control. It is only through careful planning and by diligent study of his duties that he becomes efficient and able to use good judgment in emergencies that require quick decision. His duties should never be secondary to other work.

82. The watchman should patrol the plant property to protect it from fire, vandalism or other damage and to prevent or detect pilferage and other irregularities or infractions of plant rules and regulations. He should observe carefully general conditions of buildings and equipment, detecting and reporting any irregularities or defects in plumbing, piping, lighting, power and other equipment and all apparent or potential fire and accident hazards. He should make certain that fire-fighting equipment, aisles, passageways, valve pits, fire escapes and fire doors are secured properly and have not been rendered ineffective. He should know how to turn in fire alarms and assist in extinguishing fires.

83. The watchman should be required to make a daily report, preferably on a printed form. This report should list all items and hazards pertaining to watchman service and also will serve as a constant reminder of important things to look for in making tours of duty. All dangerous and unsatisfactory conditions should be brought to the attention of responsible parties so that corrective action can be taken.

9. Reporting for Duty

91. The watchman should report for duty at a stated time, shortly before the departure of those whose responsibilities he assumes. This will enable the man on the preceding shift to pass on any essential information to the man who relieves him. If unable to report for duty for

any reason, the watchman should notify his employer in plenty of time in order that a substitute may be obtained or other arrangements made.

10. The Gate Watchman

101. Since the gate watchman is usually the first representative of management with whom the visitor or employee comes in contact, it is essential that he display a spirit of friendliness, helpfulness, courtesy and cooperation.

102. The duties of a gate watchman include the guarding of an assigned entrance to the plant area, opening and closing of gates, observing the movement of employees and visitors entering or leaving, and determining that all are identified properly. When badges or passes are issued for the admission of employees to the premises, the watchman should actually see them and not pass anyone merely because he recognizes him. The individual he recognizes may have been discharged previously. He should require submission of the necessary passes approved by authorized persons for all bundles and packages being removed from the premises by employees or visitors.

103. Watchmen should be thoroughly acquainted with the entire property and all operations, location of fire alarm boxes and always should be able to direct the municipal fire department and other municipal agencies in emergencies.

104. Records as prescribed by management should be maintained. All irregularities or unusual occurrences, whether they occur on the premises or not, should be reported immediately to designated persons in authority.

11. The Watchman's Route

111. Two important parts of good property protection are carefully laid-out routes and reliable watchman's recording systems. The authority having jurisdiction should be consulted. A plan or other record of the route should be prepared and should be available to the watchman.

112. The route should be so laid out that the watchman is required to pass through the entire area. It should not force him to retrace his steps any more than is absolutely necessary to cover all parts of the property. It should be

laid out so as to prevent shortcuts by stairways, elevators or bridges. The entire route should not require more than forty minutes time.

12. Rounds

121. Watchmen should be required to make rounds hourly during daytime when the risk is not in operation or open for business and hourly at night. Rounds may be omitted at nights in portions of the plant under continuous operation; provided that watchman's facilities are available for use when such continuous operations are suspended.

122. Day and night rounds sometimes are necessary during operating periods where the hazards involved warrant it. In some industrial properties with extra hazardous conditions or unusual hazards, more frequent rounds are desirable.

123. The authority having jurisdiction always should be consulted and its approval secured of plans to be adopted at each individual property. No general rule can be formulated. Consideration should be given to the hazards involved and what a loss would mean to production.

13. The First Round

131. Before starting out on the first round, the watchman should check his equipment. His flashlight or electric lantern and watch should be in working order, and he should have a pencil and pad of report forms, keys, and other necessities.

132. The first round is very important and during this round a thorough inspection of the premises should be made. In all probability, conditions will be found and corrected that otherwise might cause a fire or other loss. This round should begin as soon as possible after the end of activities of the preceding work shift.

133. Some of the important things to check particularly on the first round are:

- a. Outside doors and gates should be closed and locked; windows, skylights, fire doors and fire shutters should be closed.
- b. All oily waste, rags, paint residue, rubbish, etc., should be removed from buildings or placed in approved containers.
- c. All fire apparatus should be in place and not obstructed.

- d. Aisles should be clear.
- e. Motors or machines carelessly left running should be turned off.
- f. Discarded smoking materials or matches should not be left in areas where smoking is not permitted.
- g. All offices, conference rooms, and smoking areas should be checked for carelessly discarded smoking materials.
- h. All gas and electric heaters, coal and oil stoves and other heating devices on the premises should be checked.
- i. All hazardous manufacturing processes should be left in a safe condition. The temperature of driers, annealing furnaces, etc., which continue to operate during the night, and on holidays and week ends should be noted on all rounds.
- j. Hazardous materials, such as gasoline, rubber cement and other flammable and highly volatile combustibles should be kept in proper containers or removed from buildings.
- k. All sprinkler valves should be open with gauges indicating proper pressures. If not open, the fact should be reported immediately.
- l. All rooms should be checked during cold weather to determine if they are heated properly.
- m. All water faucets and air valves found leaking should be closed. If unable to stop leaks, the condition should be reported.
- n. Particular attention should be given to new construction or alterations which may be under way.

14. The Last Round

141. This round should start not more than one hour before the day's activities begin. The watchman should leave the premises only when he is relieved properly—never merely because his time has expired. If the watchman's duties include the starting of equipment, such as lighting furnaces or ovens or starting machinery on the last round, he should be instructed thoroughly. Heating equipment, especially if automatically controlled, should be checked.

15. Watchman Recording Systems

151. In order to ascertain that routes are being covered, a clock record of the watchman's movements should

be maintained. Several methods and systems are available for this purpose. Central station watchman's service is the best supervisory service obtainable. It has been found to be the most reliable and trustworthy and the largest credits in fire insurance rates are given for this type of service. It is available for small plants as well as large ones.

152. Where the plant is large and a number of watchmen are employed, the private proprietary system can be installed. By using this method, the operator located at the control center can supervise the movements of the watchmen on their routes. At operations where only a few men are required, watchman's portable clocks may be used.

153. All recording apparatus should be of an approved make and should be installed strictly in accordance with the NFPA standards and subject to the approval of the authority having jurisdiction.

154. The watchman should study and have a working knowledge of the NFPA Standards for Watchman, Fire Alarm and Supervisory Service, if they apply.*

16. Time Record Charts and Reports

161. Time record charts should be changed by the manager or other responsible person. The watchman should not be permitted to change his own time charts. Time charts and watchman's reports should be reviewed carefully by the management, who should note any irregularities and investigate immediately and thoroughly. After the watchman's reports are reviewed, the watchman should be advised as to the action to be taken. If no action is to be taken, the reasons should be explained to him. Time record charts and complete watchman's reports should be dated and filed, pending periodic review by the authority having jurisdiction.

17. The Watchman's Light

171. The watchman should be provided with a dependable electric lantern or flashlight. If he must pass through areas subject to flammable vapors, dust or flyings, he should have an explosion-proof flashlight approved for such areas. He should never be permitted to carry an oil lantern.

*NFPA Nos. 71 and 72. Published in National Fire Codes Vol. V, and in separate pamphlets, available from the National Fire Protection Association, 60 Batterymarch St., Boston 10, Mass.

18. Instruction and Training

181. Instruction and training of the watchman should be the duty of a responsible person, preferably the Chief of Plant Protection or other official in charge of the property. Advantage should be taken of state training courses for watchmen which are available under the fire training program in a number of states.

182. Superficial training or general instructions are of little value. They should be as specific as possible. When instructing and training the watchman, all possible emergencies that may confront him should be anticipated. Better judgment will result even though the actual emergency may never arise. A thorough grounding at the start with reasonable follow-ups is necessary.

183. The properly instructed watchman should know:

- a. It is his first duty to become thoroughly acquainted with the premises, including all buildings and occupancies, yard areas, entrances, roadways, stairways, elevator shafts, and other parts of the premises.
- b. How to call local municipal fire and police departments or other emergency help.
- c. Locations of all doors and fire exits.
- d. Locations of all fire alarm boxes—local and municipal.
- e. Locations of telephones.
- f. How to start and operate fire pumps.
- g. Locations of valves controlling sprinkler systems, inside riser valves, post indicator valves and sectional valves.
- h. Locations and purpose of all valves controlling mill service, steam and gas lines.
- i. Locations of hydrants, standpipes, small hose and fire extinguishers.
- j. Locations and care of hazardous manufacturing processes, especially those continuing during the night, holidays and week ends.
- k. Locations of dangerous or extra-hazardous machinery or material.
- l. The electrical equipment, how to use switches so as to control the power and lighting systems when necessary and how to shut off current in case of an emergency.

Some of the items of electrical equipment which may cause trouble are:

- (1) Sump pumps
- (2) Air conditioning systems.
- (3) Ventilating systems.
- (4) Safety controls on furnaces and ovens.
- (5) Refrigerating equipment.
- (6) Fuse boxes.
- (7) Extension cords.
- (8) Electric heaters.

184. The NFPA Inspection Manual, published by the National Fire Protection Association,* should be furnished to all watchmen. They should study and have a working knowledge of it.

19. The Private Fire Brigade

191. All watchmen, while not actually members of the private fire brigade, if any, should receive instruction with the private fire brigade's members, whenever possible. It should be stressed that the watchman may have sole custody of the plant as much as two-thirds of the time and first-aid fire fighting equipment, such as is used by the private fire brigade, is useless when the watchman is the only person on the premises and is not trained in its use.

192. Watchmen should study and have a working knowledge of the NFPA Suggestions for Private Fire Brigades.**

20. Use and Care of First Aid Fire Equipment

201. Most fires, at their start, are small and can be controlled easily. Because of this, watchmen should be familiar with first-aid fire appliances and the principles underlying their design, maintenance and use.

202. The watchman should be instructed, in case of fire, to always call the municipal fire department first before trying to extinguish a fire. He should not assume

*Available from the National Fire Protection Association at \$3.00 per copy.

**NFPA No. 27. Published in National Fire Codes Vol. IV and in separate pamphlet, available from the National Fire Protection Association, 60 Battery-march St., Boston 10, Mass.

that the extinguishing apparatus on hand will be sufficient to extinguish the fire. It is better to call the municipal fire department when it is not needed than to waste valuable time trying to extinguish the fire first, only to find out that the fire is out of control.

203. In order to provide proper and adequate fire extinguishing equipment, a study should be made of the hazards involved and the property to be protected, including the types of fires that may be encountered. It should be understood thoroughly that all types of fire extinguishers have limitations. These limitations make them suitable only for certain types of fires.

204. Watchmen should understand fully the use of fire fighting equipment and should extinguish test fires with the equipment they would be expected to use at an actual fire. The first actual fire should not be the first fire drill.

205. Watchmen should study and have a working knowledge of the NFPA Standards for First Aid Fire Appliances* and should receive instructions on the proper use of fire extinguishers as appearing in the Industrial Fire Brigades Training Manual published by the National Fire Protection Association.

21. Losses — Company and Employee

211. Detection and prevention of theft are important functions of a watchman's work. The prevention of theft is far more important than the apprehending of dishonest persons. The watchman's reports should include information as to property left unlocked or carelessly exposed to possible theft. In dealing with employees or others suspected of dishonesty, the use of courtesy, tact and good judgment are of prime importance. However, in being courteous and tactful, the watchman should not become easy or careless. Upon discovery of any actual or suspected dishonesty, it should be called immediately to the attention of the management. Decision as to action to be taken should be left to the discretion of the management.

22. Poor Watchman Service

221. The value of competent watchman service cannot be measured, because of the fact that numerous cases are

*NFPA No. 10. Published in National Fire Codes Vol. IV and in separate pamphlet, available from the National Fire Protection Association, 60 Battery-march St., Boston 10, Mass.

reported daily where watchmen on their rounds discover fires and extinguish them at the very start, preventing losses that cannot be estimated. However, there have been many fires involving large losses in which watchman service was unsatisfactory because of delayed detection of fire in the property under the protection of watchmen or by inefficient action following discovery.

222. In order to stress the importance of proper training and good judgment by watchmen, the following authentic cases are reported which indicate the lack of training and sound judgment by protection personnel:

- a. A chemical works reported a fire that originated on the first floor of a three-story building in an area where a large quantity of knocked-down corrugated paper cartons was stored. At 8:30 P.M. the watchman left the premises to visit a nearby restaurant. Upon returning at 9:20 P.M., he heard a peculiar noise. He investigated, and discovered a serious fire in the main plant and called the fire department. Previously, a neighbor had noticed the fire and attempted to control it with a yard hydrant hose. Loss—\$486,000.
- b. A food products warehouse reported that, according to a watchman's statement, a fire, when first discovered, involved empty egg crates on a loading platform. When the forty-gallon extinguisher on wheels, which he had gone to get, would not go through the door opening, he tried using several two-and-one-half-gallon extinguishers, but without effect. Approximately, thirty minutes after discovery, by which time the fire was beyond control in the one-story brick, wood-joisted building, the alarm was transmitted. Loss—\$2,260,000.
- c. In a retail lumberyard, a fire was discovered by an outsider at 4:10 A.M., five minutes before the 79-year-old watchman was to start his hourly round. On his 3:15 A.M. tour, the watchman had fired the basement boiler with sawdust and shavings, at which time, it is believed, sparks ignited wood waste stored in front of the boiler. Loss—\$215,000.

223. The watchmen in the cases cited above either were poorly selected or were improperly trained and they violated the hard and fast rule of "Always call the municipal fire department first before trying to extinguish a fire." Too much stress cannot be placed on obtaining the right man and in training him properly.