

HIKLU

Instructions for disconnecting the fire alarm and sprinkler system temporarily

Usage: For the use of rescue department personnel and customers

Scope: The Helsinki City Rescue Department, the Länsi-Uusimaa Rescue Department, the Keski-Uusimaa Rescue Department and the Eastern Uusimaa Emergency Services Department

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Instructions for disconnecting the fire alarm and sprinkler system temporarily

This guide has been prepared in cooperation with the Helsinki City Rescue Department, Eastern Uusimaa Emergency Services Department, Keski-Uusimaa Rescue Department and Länsi-Uusimaa Rescue Department.

Legal basis

Rescue Act 379/2011, Section 4 Duty of Care, Section 9 Fire Safety and Evacuation Safety in Buildings, Section 12 Maintenance of Equipment, Section 14 Self-Preparedness, Section 81 Order to Rectify Deficiencies and Suspension of Operations, and Section 82 Specific Safety Requirements.

Purpose of the instructions

The purpose of these instructions is to provide a procedure for situations where the fire alarm or fire-extinguishing system is to be disconnected. The instructions are intended for owners and occupants of buildings, persons responsible for repair or construction work and the rescue authorities. The instructions cover the requirements for inoperability due to short and long-term disconnection or a sudden failure.

Automatic fire alarm and fire-extinguishing system

Automatic fire alarm and fire-extinguishing systems are usually used in buildings to compensate for escape distances, classifications of load-bearing structures, exceeded maximum fire compartment sizes, surface class requirements, smoke extraction arrangements or other fire technical requirements. The systems can be an essential part of the safety of persons in the building (care and accommodation premises). Inoperability of the system may lead to a situation where the condition of the building is not in compliance with the building permit, and the safety of persons or fire safety in the building is not at an acceptable level. Safety of persons and fire safety in the building shall be ensured during the repair of the system by fire watch such that the use of the building can continue safely without interruption.

The risk of an accident in the building in terms of the safety of persons can become so high during the disconnection that the rescue authorities may, at their discretion, suspend operations in the building during the disconnection. Operations may need to be suspended in sites critical from the safety of persons or fire safety point of view (e.g. care and accommodation premises, large shopping centres) if fire watch measures cannot provide a sufficient level of safety for the building.

The safety of persons and fire safety characteristics of buildings may differ significantly, even in the case of properties with an identical intended use. The rescue

authorities shall always determine the disconnection measures on a case-by-case basis. The principles set out in the attached table on the impact of the intended use on fire watches are indicative.

The owner and occupant of the property and the business and industrial operator are always responsible for the operation and maintenance of the equipment. The site must be prepared for possible disconnections of the systems in the emergency plan. Property owners and occupants and business and industrial operators are also responsible for arranging line fault monitoring of the emergency response centre and monitoring of equipment fault situations and repairing any fault situations. The area of responsibility of the emergency response centre or rescue department does not include detecting line faults or equipment fault situations, responding to fault situations or identifying or correcting the cause of a fault.

Property owners and occupants and business and industrial operators are obliged to inform rescue authorities and the emergency response centre of disconnections, line faults or equipment fault situations occurring in the building.

As a rule, disconnection and reconnection may only be performed by a designated system operator. Connection activities must be recorded in a logbook. The operation must be organised such that there will be no false alarms.

The system may suddenly become inoperable due to, for example, a line fault or equipment failure. Disconnection may also be planned, for example, due to maintenance or modification. Disconnection may also be partial or begin abruptly and continue long-term.

Sudden inoperability of a system

A system of a building in use may suddenly become inoperable due, for example, a detector or nozzle failure, a water supply problem, a line fault or technical equipment failure. If the situation becomes long-term, the principles of planned disconnection shall be taken into account.

If parts of the system are disabled, a fire watch shall be provided in the affected areas in accordance with the established emergency plan. If necessary, rescue authorities may instruct the organisation of fire watch if the disconnection must be carried out due to a fault in the system (as opposed to a single detector), and the repair or maintenance cannot be carried out without delay. The instructions shall take into account the risk to persons on the site, the intended use of the building, and fire risks (e.g. hazardous substances). If necessary, several fire watch guards must be used.

Planned disconnection

If the system is switched off due to normal maintenance of the equipment or a planned short-term maintenance procedure, the rescue department has no special requirements regarding the procedure. The property's personnel must be informed of the procedure.

If the disconnection situation is long-term, large-scale or significant for the safety of persons, rescue authorities may require special procedures, such as arranging a fire watch. If the disconnection situation poses a risk to the safety of persons, rescue authorities may, at their discretion, suspend operations at the site. Rescue authorities shall assess the situation taking into account, among other things, whether the system is voluntarily installed.

If the area has effective compartmentation in relation to facilities in normal use, the fire compartment's surface area is such that it does not require an automatic fire alarm or fire-extinguishing system, and the disconnection does not substantially affect the safety of persons, deviation from the fire watch principles may be possible at the discretion of the rescue authorities. In some cases, the area may be monitored by means of an appropriate temporary smoke alarm system connected to a permanently occupied control room.

Partial disconnection does not need to be reported to the emergency response centre. If the entire system is disconnected from the alarm connection, the local rescue department and the emergency response centre must be informed.

Fire watch

The guard in the disconnected area must be a person familiar with the premises. The guard must have access rights to all monitored premises. The fire watch guard must be able to locate the fire based on the fire alarm, make the emergency call and have sufficient skills and equipment for extinguishing a fire at the initial stages at their disposal.

Patrolling at regular intervals

Patrolling at regular intervals refers to guarding that includes patrolling all the premises in the building at predetermined intervals. The person performing the patrols may leave the building. The required patrolling interval is usually every one (1) hour.

Continuous patrolling

Continuous patrolling refers to a guard or a group of guards who perform continuous regular patrols in the premises without leaving the building. The number of persons performing continuous patrolling must be such that all premises of the site

are under continuous monitoring and can be accessed quickly enough in case of a fire. Persons performing the patrolling must not leave the building unless replaced by another person.

Things to consider

- Fire safety shall be up to the level required in the Rescue Act (escape routes, first-aid extinguishing equipment, fire load, fire doors, etc.).
- The property shall check with the insurance company the safety guidelines for the disconnection of the automatic fire alarm or fire-extinguishing system.
- The duration and scope of the disconnection shall be limited to the minimum possible.
- Fire bells and buttons within the disconnected area must be excluded from the disconnection.
- Hot work and work involving a fire hazard shall be avoided, and the hot work safety guidelines complied with.

APPENDIX 1: Site-specific requirements during inoperability of an automatic fire alarm and fire-extinguishing system

| Intended use | Things to consider |
|---|---|
| <p>Care institutions (hospitals, retirement homes, housing for special groups, prisons, day-care centres)</p> | <p>Requires continuous fire watch. Ensure care room-specific alerting, e.g. by room-specific smoke alarms, the functioning of which must be verified. Fire watch can be performed by adding extra personnel.</p> |
| <p>Accommodation premises (hotels, shelters)</p> | <p>Requires continuous fire watch. Ensure accommodation room-specific alerting, e.g. by room-specific smoke alarms (rooms without an alarm must not be used for accommodation), the functioning of which must be verified. Fire watch can be performed by adding extra personnel.</p> |
| <p>Assembly and business premises (shopping centres, shops, sports halls, day-care centres, schools, libraries, restaurants)</p> | <p>The size of the assembly and business premises determines the required level of fire watch. Continuous fire watch in large premises during use to ensure the safety of persons. Patrolling at regular intervals at night.</p> |
| <p>Office premises (offices, agencies)</p> | <p>Patrolling at regular intervals if there is no personnel present. Continuous fire watch during use in the daytime can be performed by the personnel.</p> |
| <p>Production and storage premises</p> | <p>A fire watch shall be performed by patrolling at regular intervals. Any high-value property at the site, the extent of fire compartments and the fire hazard class of the operations shall be taken into account.</p> |
| <p>Garages (underground and above-ground car parks, parking garages)</p> | <p>A fire watch shall be performed by patrolling at regular intervals. Garages that are larger than usual or underground require continuous fire watch.</p> |