

Galveston Fire Department 1000.04 Fire Watch Policy

Fire Chief _____

Implementation Date: October 1982

Revision Date: July 2012

Review Date: January 2014

Purpose

Historically, the Galveston Fire Department (GFD) has required fire watch for specific events and situations in a continued effort to protect the citizens, visitors and property on Galveston Island. Multiple special events bring large crowds into small sections of the Island for prolonged periods of time each year. Roadways are typically closed and access is limited preventing us from getting large fire apparatus into the area in the event of an emergency.

Another example is explosives. Galveston has been an ideal location to import and export explosives. This has required vehicle escorts to protect the citizens and prevent incidents that could result in these explosives detonating. We also require a stand by crew while these explosives are transferred from one form of transportation to another or when being set up for a display such as the Fourth of July. This is a practice started in the early 1960's.

Another situation requiring a fire watch would be hot roof work. Due to several significant fires in the late 70's and early 80's due to welding and hot roof work, it was determined that a fire watch be on site during many of these operations to prevent major fires and ultimately preserve property.

Hiring

Hiring procedures for Fire watch assignments are outlined in the Galveston Fire Department Rules & Regulations Section 800 Overtime/Fire watch. These rules ensure compliance with the Collective bargaining agreement between Local 571 and the City. These rules are followed to ensure consistency and fairness for all personnel.

The rate of pay for assignments not paid by the City of Galveston, are established annually through the Fire Marshal's office.

Insurance

Not all fire watch assignments are under the direction and control of the City of Galveston. It is understood by all personnel that worker compensation coverage will be the responsibility of the Company paying for the fire watch service. For some special events, the City requires the fire watch therefore, the personnel working are covered under the City's policy. In the event of an incident during any fire watch, personnel involved in the incident will be covered by the City worker's compensation plan.

Vehicles

When it is determined that vehicles are required for a fire watch assignment, marked city vehicles are to be used. Personal, unmarked vehicles are not allowed. These vehicles will be operated by fire department personnel at all times and all GFD policies and procedures are to be followed without exception.

Uniforms

Personnel assigned to work fire watch will wear their GFD uniform in accordance with Rules & Regulations Section 300.01 All Personnel – Appearance/Uniforms. Personnel are representing the department and will adhere to GFD Policies and Procedures at all times while in uniform.

Special Events

Each year for Mardi Gras, Bike Rally and Dickens on The Strand, GFD will hire personnel for each of these events. Crew size is determined based upon projected crowd size and weather forecasts. The crew sizes can be adjusted based on actual conditions the day of the event.

Our standard hiring practice is that all GFD personnel are notified of the pending event and assignment potential. The personnel notify their respective Battalion Chief if they are interested in working. On the Wednesday immediately preceding the event personnel are hired based on the list of those interested.

In recent years, due to crowd size and the availability of our Brush Trucks, we assign a Brush truck to the personnel assigned to the entertainment district. This truck is capable of negotiating the crowds and possibly reaching the scene of any fire that may occur within the area.

Explosives Fire watch

In accordance with City Ordinance 82-69, section 16-104, anyone wishing to transport, load, unload or assist with unloading of explosives must obtain a permit from the Fire Marshal's Office and United States Coast Guard. In addition, a surety bond and public liability insurance policy for \$1,000,000.00 for all explosive permits issued. Copies of the Explosive regulations are available in the Fire Marshal's Office.

Once the Fire Marshal's Office is notified that a load of explosives will be moved through the city, a minimum of two (2) Fire Inspectors will escort the vehicle carrying the explosives using marked fire vehicles. The Fire Marshal is authorized to use other law

enforcement agencies to assist with the escort when needed. A crew of four (4) firefighters will be hired to staff a fire apparatus. This apparatus will stand by near the designated loading/un-loading location.

In the event that the explosives will be used for a fireworks display, The Fire Marshal will have a minimum of one (1) Fire Inspector on site while the fireworks display is being set up. In addition, the Fire Marshal has the authority to hire a crew of firefighters to staff a fire apparatus and stand by near the site of the display. Copies of the Fireworks regulations are available in the Fire Marshal's Office.

Hot Roof Operations

In accordance with the 2009 International Fire Code 26, as adopted by the City of Galveston, a fire watch shall be on site anytime a hot roof operation is in progress. This requires a firefighter be hired and on site before the work can begin.

Fire Watch Duties

The Galveston Fire Dept. has an outstanding reputation of preserving life and property during fire watch assignments. The purpose of this policy is to reinforce the expectations of those working fire watch details and to maintain our level of awareness while working a fire watch assignment.

Report to your assignment at the designated time.

Report to your assignment wearing the appropriate uniform attire.

Remain attentive throughout your assignment.

Prevent problems before they occur, when possible.

Prevent the loss of life through the appropriate actions needed for the detail you are assigned.

On occasion, there may be specific duties for specific fire watch assignments. These duties may be developed by the Fire Marshal and shall be adhered to for that specific assignment. A failure to follow the general or specific duties of any fire watch detail will result in, but not limited to, the immediate removal from the fire watch detail. Additional disciplinary actions may include removal of all assigned personnel during the time of the infraction from the fire watch board for a period of 1 year. The Fire Chief will ultimately decide on the appropriate actions to be taken if needed.