



Guidelines/Procedures

SUBJECT: Fire Protection Systems Impairment Process Guidelines and Procedures
Guideline/Procedure for AR#: *Management Safety Statement*
Date Effective:

PURPOSE AND SCOPE:

This document establishes the procedures to be followed when a fire system is required to be impaired at any Austin Community College owned or leased property.

Since serious consequences can result when fire protection systems are placed out of service, this procedure is to provide a mechanism for the authorization of a fire protection system shut down and provide safety procedures to put in place during the shut down.

An impairment is any situation in which all or part of a fire system is turned off, or otherwise temporarily rendered inoperable or operating in a diminished capacity. Fire systems shall include automatic fire sprinklers or other fire suppression system, standpipe systems, fire alarm and detection systems, under/above ground water supply mains, associated ancillary equipment, etc. This also includes elevators located in a high- rise building.

COMPLIANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY

Any person, and his/her organization, who performs or coordinates fire system installation, maintenance, testing, repair, alarm response or other operation which requires impairment of a fire system shall be responsible for compliance with these procedures.

The **ACC President** is the college Official ultimately responsible for ACC's compliance with environmental health and safety regulations. The ACC College President shall show visible support for safety as a value at ACC, through funding and appropriate staffing in support of the ACC Fire System Impairment Process.

The **ACC Executive Team / Administrators** are responsible for insuring implementation of the Fire System Impairment Process within their areas of responsibility, showing visible support for the Fire System Impairment Process and for insuring the health and safety of the department's employees and ACC students.

The **Dean, Unit Director or Department Chair** has primary authority and responsibility to insure departmental implementation of the Fire System Impairment Process and to ensure the health and safety of the department's faculty, staff and students. This is accomplished by communicating the

President/Executive Vice President: _____ Date: _____

Fire System Impairment

emphasis on health and safety, analyzing work procedures for hazard identification and correction, ensuring regular workplace inspections, providing health and safety training, and encouraging prompt employee reporting of health and safety concerns without fear of reprisal.

The **Environmental Health Safety and Insurance Office** administers and coordinates the Fire System Impairment Process for ACC and designated ACC facilities.

DEFINITIONS

Fire Protection System: a system which functions to control or minimize the effects of unwanted fires, or to alarm in the event of fire via various means including suppression and detection systems. This system may also provide supervisory alarm of items such as control valve position, switch status, etc.

Impairment: any condition in a fire protection system which degrades or likely to degrade its intended performance below the minimum operability requirements of the system.

Impairment Tracking: the formalized process of tracking impairments and certain minimum operability requirements of fire protection systems and fire alarm systems.

Authorized Person: a person who by the nature of their job and it's implicit training and skills requirements, has been authorized to initiate an impairment and/or work on a fire protection system.

NOTIFICATION/COORDINATION/AUTHORIZATION

1. The following individuals shall be notified for all fire system impairments:
 - Director of Buildings and Grounds
 - EHS and Insurance Office
 - Maintenance Supervisors
 - Campus Police at affected ACC Campus
 - Campus Police Dispatch
 - Campus Manager at affected ACC Campus
2. The person or organization requesting to schedule a fire system impairment, hereafter referred to as the "requester", is responsible for contacting Campus Police to request approval for the impairment.
 - a. Coordination of fire system impairments shall start approximately 5 working days prior to the anticipated impairment date. A "Fire Protection System Shutdown Request", which available on <http://accweb.austincc.edu/accforms/other%20services/servhome.h>

tml shall be completed for **all fire system impairment requests**.

This form shall be reviewed and approval signatures received from:

1. EHS and Insurance Office
 2. Director of Buildings and Grounds
 3. Maintenance Supervisor
- b. Written notification of fire system impairments (Fire Protection System Shutdown Request) is required when substantial risk to life or property is involved, critical operations are affected, numerous occupants are affected or the impairment is for an extended period of time (in excess of 24 hours). All coordination and scheduling of impairments shall be completed within a minimum of 48 hours prior to the impairment, except for minor and emergency outages which are addressed below.
- c. Minor and emergency fire system impairments may be accomplished with less than 48 hours notice, provided that all notification and coordination is complete. Fire system impairments considered to be minor in nature include fire system testing, maintenance and repairs which are of a short duration (24 hours or less), do not impact critical operations and do not include substantial risk for loss of life or property.
- d. The EHS and Insurance Office (or their designee) shall notify the property insurance carrier of all fire system impairments greater than 24 hours or if multiple systems are impaired at the same time.
- e. The EHS and Insurance Office (or their designee) shall also notify, coordinate and schedule all fire system impairments with building occupants who will be affected.
- f. A copy of the approved Fire Protection System Shutdown Request shall be faxed to Campus Police Dispatch and to the Campus where the impairment is occurring prior to the start of work.
- g. When a fire system is placed back in service, all personnel who were previously notified of the system impairment shall be notified that the fire system is back in service. Responsibility for notifying occupants and other appropriate entities when the fire system is placed back in service shall rest with the EHS and Insurance Office (or their designee). This notification must be documented

Fire System Impairment

1. Immediately before the scheduled impairment of any fire system, the EHS and Insurance Office shall notify all persons listed above.
2. When a fire sprinkler system, standpipe system, or domestic water supply line tied to a fire or standpipe system, or any portion thereof, is impaired for testing, maintenance, repair or other reason, the requester working on the system shall fill out an impairment tag with the EHS and Insurance Office (or their designee) and the Maintenance Supervisor (or their designee). The EHS and Insurance Office (or their designee) will use the information on the tag to notify the insurance carrier (if necessary). The EHS and Insurance Office (or their designee) will attach the tag to the affected shut valve(s) at the point of work (or any other location required by applicable procedures) to indicate that the system is inoperative. The requester shall notify the Maintenance Supervisor (or their designee) when the work is complete. The Maintenance Supervisor (or their designee) shall open the shut-off valve(s), remove the impairment tags and place the system back in service. He shall also fill-out the reopening information on the tag and return it to the EHS and Insurance Office (or his/her designee) for record keeping purposes.
3. Whenever a fire alarm and detection system is shut down for testing, maintenance, repair, or any other reason, an impairment tag shall be filled out and will be handled following the same protocol as mentioned above. The EHS and Insurance Office (or his/her designee) shall attach the tag to the Fire Alarm Control Panel / annunciator panel for that system (or any other location required by other applicable procedures) to indicate the inoperative status of the system. The requester shall notify the Maintenance Supervisor (or their designee) when the work is complete. The Maintenance Supervisor (or his designee) shall reset the alarm system, remove the impairment tags and place the system back in service. He shall also fill-out the reset information on the tag and return it to the EHS and Insurance Office (or his/her designee) for record keeping purposes.
4. All work on a fire system shall, when possible, be continuous until the system is restored to operational status. All work on a fire system shall be completed as quickly as possible to minimize downtime. In the event of interruptions or lengthy delays in excess of 48 hours, the EHS and Insurance Office (or his/her designee) shall use discretion to exercise the powers and authority granted under applicable Fire Prevention Codes to alleviate a fire hazard.
5. Upon completion of all fire system work, all affected components of the system shall be inspected and tested by the Maintenance Supervisor (or his designee) and other applicable personnel.
6. All fire systems shall be mechanically secured when they are placed back in service (fire alarm system panels shall be locked and key removed, fire sprinkler system valves shall be locked open, etc.)
7. The EHS and Insurance Office (or his/her designee) shall determine the

Fire System Impairment

appropriate level of occupancy or activity that may take place in a building or area during fire system impairment. Buildings requiring fire system impairment shall be evaluated by the EHS and Insurance Office (or his/her designee) to determine if any temporary fire protection measures need to be implemented during the impairment (e.g. fire guard service). At the discretion of the EHS and Insurance Office (or his/her designee), any impairment of a fire system may be canceled if the required temporary fire protection measures have not been fully implemented, or the building may be ordered vacated if fire system impairment renders the building unsafe for occupancy.

8. Completed Fire Protection System Shutdown Request forms shall be maintained for a period of one year by the EHS and Insurance Office.
9. Any unauthorized fire system impairment shall be reported to the EHS and Insurance Office (or his/her designee) for immediate follow-up and initiation of appropriate action.
10. The Director of Buildings and Grounds will perform the activities mentioned above if the EHS and Insurance Office (or his/her designee) is unavailable.

PROHIBITIONS

No automatic fire sprinkler system shall be turned off or otherwise rendered inoperable while welding, cutting or other open flame work is in progress. No contractor or ACC employee shall operate or impair any fire system unless directed by the Maintenance Supervisor.