

Notes from Statewide Multifamily Housing Industry on Hurricane Helene Relief **Thursday, October 10, 2024**

Power and Water Issues:

- Bryan Holladay is closely working with Asheville to gather information on power and water issues.
- Bryan shared a water map, available on the [AAWNC website](#), which is not 100% accurate but provides useful information.
- Daily updates from the City of Asheville are included.
- Sarah, Jon, and Bryan are receiving updates through the BEOC calls (as well as any related items to the Hurricane aftermath).

Fire Watch:

The Asheville Fire Department has limited firefighting capabilities due to the lack of water supply. If properties have non-working sprinkler systems, they are required to perform Fire Watches (see notice following these notes).

- Many companies are using third-party temp agencies for fire watches.
- Concerns were raised about whether these agencies are knowledgeable about fair housing regulations.
- A suggestion was made to use staffing agencies to assist with fire watch operations, potentially facilitating fire watch rotations.
- Some temp agencies are reluctant to assist due to liability concerns.
- Bryan clarified that fire watch is unnecessary if water is available and/or if a property has power and does not have a sprinkler system installed.
- Bryan and Jon are looking into the specific requirements for fire watch.

BEOC Information Requests:

- **Jon and Bryan are requesting properties to relay:**
 - The impact of long-term water loss on their property.
 - Any operational plans for dealing with water issues.
 - Needs to keep operations running, including heating requirements.
 - Current status of portable showers, handwashing stations, and bathrooms, as well as companies that can service them.
- **Property managers should email Jon or Bryan with their property's current status.**



**Asheville Fire Department
Notice regarding Hurricane Helene Sprinkler System outages**



The Asheville Fire Department understands that due to the current situation caused by Hurricane Helene that fire protection systems are out of service.

The Asheville Fire Department will still respond but our firefighting capabilities are **LIMITED** due the lack of water supply and the need for additional water being transported to the fire scene. In Order to remain open to the public without operating Fire Sprinklers a fire watch is **REQUIRED**.

Fire Watch Duties

Personnel to conduct the fire watch are determined by the building owner.

Definition of Fire Watch

The assignment of a person or persons to an area for the express purpose of notifying the fire department and/or building occupants of an emergency, preventing a fire from occurring, extinguishing small fires, or protecting the public from fire or life safety dangers.

Requirements of the NC State Fire Prevention Code

Fire Alarm and/or Sprinkler System Shutdown

NCSFC Section 901.7- Where a required Fire Protection System is out of service, the fire department and the fire code official shall be notified immediately and, where required by the fire code official, the building shall either be evacuated or an approved fire watch shall be provided for all occupants left unprotected by the shutdown until the fire protection system has been returned to service.

Owner Responsibilities

- a. Establish, instruct and maintain fire watch personnel.
- b. Notify the fire alarm monitoring company.
- c. Notify your insurance carrier

Personnel serving as a fire watch must have the following duties

- a. Conduct periodic patrols of the entire facility as specified.
- b. Identify any fire, life or property hazards.
- c. Notify the Fire Department if a fire is discovered by calling 911 with the exact address and type of emergency.

- d. Notify occupants of the facility of the need to evacuate. If the sirens or public address function of the alarm system are still functional, use them to assist with evacuation of the building.
- e. Determine at least one means of direct communication with the Fire Department. A telephone is acceptable. The person conducting fire watch must have the authority to call 911 in the event of an emergency.
- f. Maintain a log of fire watch activities.
- g. Have knowledge of the location and use of fire protection equipment, such as fire extinguishers.
- h. Fire watch personnel cannot have other duties besides their assigned fire watch. However, the Fire Department may designate other duties.

NOTE: The fire watch will not perform fire-fighting duties beyond the scope of the ordinary citizen.

Recommended Frequency of Inspections

Fire watch personnel should patrol the entire facility every 15 minutes in the following situations.

- a. The facility has people sleeping.
- b. The facility is an institutional occupancy.
- c. The facility is an occupied place of assembly.

Facilities that do not meet the requirements for a 15-minute patrol frequency should have a fire watch patrol every 30 minutes.

Record Keeping

A fire watch log should be maintained at the facility. The log must always be available during the fire watch and should show the following:

- 1. Address of the facility.
- 2. Times that the patrol has completed each tour of the facility.
- 3. Name of the person conducting the fire watch.
- 4. Record of communication(s) to the fire department and monitoring company.
- 5. Record of other information as directed by the fire department personnel.



Fill out the following form to report your fire watch:

[Fire Watch acknowledgement](#)