

NYC FIRE CODE GUIDE – CHAPTER 9
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION AND RESPONSE (#12)

**IMPAIRMENT COORDINATOR AND FIRE WATCH REQUIREMENTS AND HOT WORK RESTRICTIONS
FOR OUT OF SERVICE FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS AT CONSTRUCTION SITES**

NEW BUILDINGS UNDER CONSTRUCTION (OCCUPIED BY CONSTRUCTION PERSONNEL ONLY)

	Fire Protection System	Status of Installation ¹	Impairment Coordinator Required? ²	Fire Watch Required When Fire Protection System Out of Service? ^{3,4}	Hot Work Allowed When Fire Protection System Out of Service? ⁵
1	Standpipe system	Installed and approved	Yes	Yes. Fire watch required at all times (regardless of whether building vacant or occupied by construction personnel). Comply with FC901.7.7.	No hot work allowed.
2A	Sprinkler system	Not yet installed and/or approved	No	No fire watch required, except where special circumstances require. ⁶	Hot work allowed.
2B		Installed and approved	Yes	Yes, as required by FC901.7. No fire watch required when entire building vacant/evacuated of construction personnel, except where special circumstances require. ⁶	No hot work allowed.
3A	Fire alarm system	Not yet installed and/or approved	No	No fire watch required, except where special circumstances require. ⁶	Hot work allowed.
3B		Installed and approved	Yes	Yes, as required by FC901.7. No fire watch required when entire building vacant/evacuated of construction personnel, except where special circumstances require. ⁶	Hot work allowed, except no hot work allowed when fire alarm system sprinkler water flow alarm is out of service.

For purposes of this table:

¹ A fire protection system is “installed and approved” when all required approvals for a full or partial installation have been obtained, including all signoffs required by the NYC Building Code.

² The obligation to provide an impairment coordinator arises as soon as the fire protection system is installed and approved. If no impairment coordinator is designated, the building owner is deemed to be the impairment coordinator in accordance with FC901.7.1. See Footnote 9 for additional information about impairment coordinators.

³ A “fire watch” means the patrolling of the areas affected by an out-of-service fire protection system for fire by a Fire Department-certified fire guard (F-01 Certificate of Fitness) in accordance with FC901.7.2. The presence of a “watchperson” (holding a Fire Department F-60 Certificate of Fitness) at the construction site, as required by Building Code 3303.3, does not constitute compliance with the fire watch requirement of FC901.7.2.

⁴ “Out of service” means the fire protection system is not in good working order and/or has been temporarily removed from service for repair, maintenance or construction.

⁵ Hot work restrictions apply in areas affected by the out-of-service fire protection system. In accordance with FC901.7.7(4.3), hot work is not allowed anywhere on the construction site if the standpipe system is out of service. Hot work restrictions do not preclude hot work required to restore a fire protection system to service.

⁶ “Special circumstances” means a construction site determined by the Fire Department (pursuant to FC1404.5) to be unusually hazardous, which may include the following conditions: (1) no working fire hydrant within 250 feet of entrance to building or 100 feet of fire department connection (BC3303.7); (2) impediments to fire apparatus access to building; (3) no fire apparatus access to within 100 feet of temporary or permanent fire department connection (FC1410); (4) anticipated delays in Fire Department response due to location of construction site; (5) sensitive occupancies in close proximity to construction site, including schools, hospitals and nursing homes; hazardous materials storage; public utility substations; bridges or other major infrastructure; (6) one or more fires, pattern of violations or other history of noncompliance at construction site(s); and (7) other special circumstances as determined by the Chief of Fire Prevention or Chief of Operations.

**BUILDINGS OR FLOORS UNDERGOING ALTERATION and
NEW BUILDINGS PARTIALLY OCCUPIED PURSUANT TO A TEMPORARY CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY**

	Fire Protection System	Status of System ¹	Impairment Coordinator Required? ²	Fire Watch Required When Fire Protection System Out of Service? ^{3,4, 7}	Hot Work Allowed When Fire Protection System Out of Service? ⁵
4	Standpipe system	Installed and approved	Yes	Yes. Fire watch required at all times (regardless of whether building vacant or occupied). Comply with FC901.7.7.	No hot work allowed.
5A	Sprinkler system	Installed and approved (not removed)	Yes	Yes, as required by FC901.7. No fire watch required when entire building vacant/evacuated, except where special circumstances require. ⁶	No hot work allowed.
5B		Removed pursuant to DOB permit. ⁸ No core loop system required.	No	No fire watch required, except where special circumstances require. ⁶	Hot work allowed.
5C		Removed pursuant to DOB permit. ⁸ Core loop system installed and approved.	Yes ⁹	Fire watch required when core loop system out of service and building occupied. No fire watch required when entire building vacant/evacuated, except where special circumstances require. ⁶	Hot work allowed when core loop in service. No hot work allowed when core loop system out of service.
6	Fire alarm system	Installed and approved (not removed) ¹⁰	Yes	Yes, as required by FC901.7. No fire watch required when entire building vacant/evacuated, except where special circumstances require. ⁶	Hot work allowed, except no hot work allowed when fire alarm system sprinkler water flow alarm is out of service.

⁷ The removal of building compartmentation that served as passive fire protection in lieu of a sprinkler system (in pre-2008 buildings) constitutes an out of service sprinkler system.

⁸ Fire Department approval must be obtained in accordance with Building Code Sections 3303.7.4.3 and 3303.9 before DOB will authorize removal of a fire protection system.

⁹ An impairment coordinator is required for the core loop system and any portions of the building sprinkler system that remain installed and in good working order. In a partially occupied building, the building owner can make the building's impairment coordinator responsible for out-of-service fire protection systems in the areas of the building undergoing alteration or may designate a separate impairment coordinator. If separate impairment coordinators are designated, they must coordinate their respective responsibilities. See NYC Fire Code Guide, Chapter 9, Frequently Asked Question #10.

¹⁰ DOB allows removal or covering of smoke detectors during construction work provided that the other fire alarm system components remain operational. See DOB Buildings Bulletin 2012-009. A modified fire alarm system complying with the terms of the DOB permit is considered installed and approved for purposes of this analysis.

BUILDINGS UNDER DEMOLITION

	Fire Protection System	Status of Installation¹	Impairment Coordinator Required?²	Fire Watch Required When Fire Protection System Out of Service?^{3,4}	Hot Work Allowed When Fire Protection System Out of Service?⁵
7	Standpipe system	Installed and approved	Yes	Yes. Fire watch required at all times (regardless of whether building vacant/evacuated or occupied by construction personnel). Comply with FC901.7.7.	No hot work allowed.
8A	Sprinkler system	Installed and approved, except removed on floor(s) under active demolition.	Yes	Yes, as required by FC901.7. No fire watch required on floors under active demolition, or when entire building vacant/evacuated, except where special circumstances require. ⁶	No hot work allowed, except on floors under active demolition.
8B		Removed pursuant to DOB permit ⁸	No	Yes, in lieu of an operational sprinkler system, except in buildings undergoing mechanical demolition. No fire watch required on floors under active demolition, or when entire building vacant/evacuated, except where special circumstances require. ⁶	Hot work allowed.
9A	Fire alarm system	Installed and approved, except removed on floor(s) under active demolition ¹⁰	Yes	Yes, as required by FC901.7. No fire watch required on floors under active demolition, or when entire building vacant/evacuated, except where special circumstances require. ⁶	Hot work allowed.
9B		Removed pursuant to DOB permit ⁸	No	No fire watch required, except where special circumstances require. ⁶	Hot work allowed.