

PROCEDURE: Bypassing/Deactivating Fire Alarm Systems			NUMBER: WP-79
PREPARED BY: Facilities Management (FM)	AUTHORIZED BY:  Andrew Konowalchuk	CLASSIFICATION: Work Procedure	EFFECTIVE: November 13, 2025
			SUPERSEDES: NEW

POLICY:

Certain construction, maintenance, and repair activities within Western University facilities have the potential to inadvertently activate building fire alarm systems. False fire alarms disrupt academic, research, and operational activities by causing building evacuations and unnecessary interruptions. In addition, Western University is subject to monetary penalties from the London Fire Department for false alarms, and such incidents place an avoidable burden on emergency response resources.

To mitigate these risks, all work activities that could trigger fire alarm devices must include appropriate control measures. This includes implementing a temporary bypass or deactivation of the specific fire alarm devices at risk of accidental activation, while ensuring the remainder of the fire alarm system remains fully functional to provide alarm coverage in the event of an actual fire elsewhere in the building.

Western University is committed to minimizing false fire alarms by requiring that these preventive measures be followed consistently during all applicable work activities.

PROCEDURE:

The following types of work can trigger or impact fire alarm systems:

- Hot Work (WP-43 activities): Welding, soldering, torch use, or any work generating open flames or significant heat/smoke.
- Dust-Producing Activities: Cutting, grinding, sanding, sweeping, or any task that generates or disturbs airborne particulates.
- Fire Protection System Service: Work on fire pumps, sprinkler systems, valves, or sprinkler heads that may reduce pressure or cause water flow.
- Fire Alarm System Service: Disconnecting, replacing, modifying, or relocating fire alarm devices or wiring, including verification and routine testing.

1. Pre-Work Planning

- a. Identify potential fire alarm system impacts based on work activities.
- b. Obtain required permits and approvals.
- c. Notify all affected parties.
- d. Create service interruption, indicating work order # and areas/rooms affected

2. System Bypass/Deactivation

- a. Fire Alarm Technician performs bypass or deactivation.
- b. Document the affected zones, devices, or systems if different from work order direction, via work order or email. Send notes to lead or shop manager of the electrical shop to have work order updated.

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c. Implement fire watch or alternate measures as required. 3. <i>During Work</i> - Maintain open communication between Requester, Fire Alarm Technician, and On-Site Worker. - Ensure the fire watch remains in place until the systems are restored. - Continuously monitor for unsafe conditions. 4. <i>Post-Work Restoration</i> - Fire Alarm Technician restores system(s) to full operation. - Remove temporary fire safety measures once restoration is verified. <u>RESPONSIBILITIES:</u> <i>Requester</i> - Plan and coordinate work activities in advance (except in emergencies). - Contact Fire Safety or the Electrical Shop to determine which devices, if any, require a Fire Alarm bypass. Note: depending on the work and location, a bypass may not be required. - If a Fire Alarm bypass is required: - Submit a Service Interruption Notice at least seven (7) days in advance in accordance with WP-21. - Include Fire Safety and the Electrical Shop as reviewers. - Provide contact information for the on-site worker performing the work. - Refer to WP-43 for fire watch requirements in the work area and any other areas left without fire detection due to the bypass. - If the work is cancelled or rescheduled, immediately notify the Electrical Shop that the Fire Alarm bypass is no longer required. - Ensure that an on-site worker is present when the Fire Alarm Technician attends the site. If no worker is present, the bypass will not be performed, and the system will remain active. <i>Fire Alarm Technician</i> - Review the Service Interruption Notice and confirm bypass requirements with the on-site worker before proceeding. - Do not perform a bypass if: - The on-site worker cannot be contacted, or - There are no workers on-site to conduct the required fire watch. In such cases, notify the Requester that the bypass must be rescheduled. - Notify the Fire Alarm Monitoring Company of any system troubles that should be disregarded during the bypass. - Perform the required bypass or deactivation of devices/zones and notify the on-site worker once work can safely begin. - Maintain communication with the on-site worker regarding the anticipated end time of the bypass. - Return to site as required to confirm work completion and remove the bypass/reactivate devices. - Notify the Fire Alarm Monitoring Company when the system is restored to full operation.	

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On-Site Worker

1. Do not begin work that may activate the Fire Alarm System until the Fire Alarm Technician confirms the bypass or deactivation has been completed. Do not assume a bypass has been performed.
2. Maintain ongoing communication with the Fire Alarm Technician regarding the anticipated end time of the work.
3. If work is completed earlier than scheduled:
 - a. Notify the Requester, the Electrical Shop, or (after hours) Western Special Constable Service (WSCS).
 - b. Continue to meet all requirements of WP-43 (e.g., fire watch, hot spot checks) until the Fire Alarm Technician confirms the system is restored.
4. Maintain continuous monitoring of area bypassed. Do not leave area unmonitored until the bypass(es) are removed. Areas are not to be left unattended with bypasses in place.

WSCS	(519) 661-3300
Operations On-Call Manager	(226) 385-8197
Client Services (7:00am – 4:30pm)	(519) 661-3304

DEFINITIONS:

Requestor: May be any FM employee that is coordinating the work (FDE Project Manager/Coordinator, FM Shop Manager, FM Shop Lead Hand, FM Shop employee, etc.).

Worker May be any Contractor or FM employee that will be on-site performing the work.

Fire Alarm Technician: May be any FM Electrician or Fire Safety employee with a valid Canadian Fire Alarm Association (CFAA) Registered Technician. Verification work related to fire alarm systems and device installations or modifications may be performed by Fire Alarm System manufacturers CFAA Registered Field Service Technicians.

REFERENCE:

[WP-21: Notice of Service Interruption or Area Closure](#)

[WP-43: Hot or Open Flame Work](#)