

**REED COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SAFETY
DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTIVE**

CSO FIRE & FIRE ALARM SYSTEM RESPONSE GUIDELINES

Source: Departmental Directive issued by the CS Director.

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Departmental Policy

Community Safety Officers (CSOs) are required to respond to the vicinity of fires on, or that may impact, the Reed campus. CSOs are further required to immediately report fires to Community Safety Dispatch or directly to the Portland Fire & Rescue (via 911) if contact with Dispatch is not possible.

When CSOs respond to actual fires, CSOs may attempt—but are not required—to extinguish the fire only when doing so will not place the CSO or others at substantial increased risk of harm.

Procedure for Reporting Fires

When a CSO becomes aware of an actual fire, the CSO is required to take the following steps in the order listed:

1. Activate fire alarm: If the fire is inside, on, or immediately adjacent to a facility with a fire alarm, immediately activate the fire alarm system for the facility by use of a manual pull station or similar mechanism.
2. Notify Dispatch: Contact Community Safety Dispatch and report the fire and that the fire alarm has been activated.
 - 2.1. If unable to immediately notify Dispatch, the CSO shall notify the Portland Fire Bureau via 911.
 - 2.2. Dispatch will make appropriate notifications (per Dispatch procedure).
3. Protect Life: First priority is to take reasonable actions to protect life.
 - 3.1. Remain at a safe distance.
 - 3.2. Facilitate the evacuation from the facility or area.
 - 3.3. Assess the best avenue of approach for emergency responders and relay this information to Dispatch.
 - 3.4. Update Dispatch with information for emergency responders.
4. Protect Property: Take reasonable action to protect property while not putting the CSO or others at substantial increased risk of injury (see below for guidelines on attempting to extinguish fires).
5. Assist emergency responders in responding to the scene, controlling the scene, getting information on the facility, etc.

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Guidelines for Attempting to Extinguish Fires

CSOs who respond to actual fires may—but are not required to—attempt to extinguish the fire under the following circumstances:

- Attempting to extinguish the fire will not place the CSO or others at substantial increased risk of harm from smoke inhalation, heat, toxic fumes, hot embers, explosion, falling debris, collapsing floors, or any other reasonably identifiable hazard related to the fire.
- The fire is small, contained, and has not spread beyond its starting point.
- The air is safe to breathe. The fire has not depleted the oxygen in the room and is producing only small quantities of smoke and/or gas.
- The exit is clear, there is no imminent peril, there is a safe evacuation path, and the CSO can fight the fire with his/her back to the exit.
- The CSO reasonably believes that the fire may be safely extinguished by the use of a single fire extinguisher.

CSOs are *prohibited* from attempting to extinguish fires under any of the following circumstances:

- Attempting to extinguish the fire will place the CSO and/or others at substantial increased risk of harm.
- The fire cannot be extinguished by the use of a single fire extinguisher.
- The fire is inside a contained space (e.g., room, mechanical space, cabinet, vehicle hood or trunk, etc.) and attempting to extinguish the fire would require that the CSO open the door, hood, panel, etc. in order to access the fire.
- The fire involves explosive materials, items, or containers.

Nothing in this directive is meant to require a CSO to attempt to extinguish a fire or to otherwise place themselves at risk of injury.

General Response Guidelines to Fire System Activation(s)

All activations of a fire system must be immediately investigated to determine whether or not there is an imminent threat to life or property. Because fire has the potential to injure or kill on a large scale, fire alerts take priority over all other service calls and field activity that is not related to an immediate threat to life. Responding CSOs, while not expected to put themselves at risk, must take all reasonable steps to determine whether or not a threat exists.

Room & Residence Entry in Response to Fire System Activation(s)

All activations of a fire system must be investigated to the point of determining whether or not a threat exists. CSOs are required to enter any space on campus, including

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residence hall rooms, and private offices, when there is an alarm system activation originating from the location and the only method of evaluating the activation is entry.

In cases of smoke detector activations (including Trouble or Fault signals) in residence hall rooms, the responding CSO must personally inspect the space in question, including the detector, in order to evaluate the situation and take appropriate action. CSOs should make reasonable efforts to alert occupants before entering, but will not delay prompt evaluation of the fire system activation.

Fires That May Pose an On-going Risk

Unless a fire is completely contained and/or completely extinguished beyond any reasonable doubt, the fire bureau shall be called to assess the situation.

Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ❑ Brush fires or other fires involving vegetation or flammable debris may smolder for hours or days with little or no obvious evidence and then re-ignite. Any fire, smoke, or reasonably suspected fire of this type should be evaluated by firefighters.
- ❑ Furniture fires, including seemingly low-level burns by flammable materials, such as low-level burns caused by cigarettes, may smolder inside of cushions or other areas for hours before re-igniting without warning. Any such fire or suspected fire should be evaluate by firefighters.

Documentation

All fires, or instances of substantial smoke, resulting in a response from Portland Fire & Rescue, or requiring the use of a fire extinguisher or other intervention to extinguish the fire, must be documented in an incident report.

Investigation Requirements

Most fires must be reported to Portland Fire & Rescue. These require investigation by fire officials in order to determine whether or not the fire was intentional and potentially arson. Federal Clery Act reporting requirements mandate that, unless the cause is known to be accidental, investigation and reporting are mandatory. Because of this, *unless a fire was accidental, and the cause is known beyond a reasonable doubt, fire officials shall be notified and asked to investigate.*

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First System Information & Instructions

Note: CS staff are not qualified to assess the functionality of alarms systems, nor are they qualified to attempt repairs of a fire or other alarm system. Any alarm system that is not functioning properly or that generates alarms or trouble signals shall be reported to Facilities for assessment and repair.

Exception: CSOs may replace a battery in a smoke detector in a residence hall or apartment in order to silence a low battery alert and keep the detector in working order if the problem occurs after hours, or when Facilities staff are not available. Batteries are kept at Dispatch.

Definitions

Device: Any terminal equipment that monitors fire/life safety.

Example: Smoke detector, pull station, flow switch, etc.

Test: A mode where First Response ignores a particular alarm, or particular system's alerts: leaving everything not placed in "Test" still fully operational.

Fire System: (Notifier) Combination of devices in a building addressed to a specific fire panel that is programmed to alert/instruct building occupants. The system also monitors devices and notifies central station (First Response) of problems.

Intrusion Alarm: This can be a building alarm with local enunciation if unauthorized persons have entered an armed building or it can be a monitored high/low temperature alarm.

Water Flow "Zone 1": Indicates water is flowing through the fire sprinkler pipe(s). Sprinklers may be intact--but water is flooding the pipe. This "Alarm" sounds throughout the building and also initiates the riser bell on the exterior of a building. **Building occupants should evacuate.**

Fire Alarm "Zone 2": Building fire system is in "true" alarm. Bells and strobes are going off in building. **Building occupants should evacuate.** *Alarms should NOT be silenced or cleared until an authorized person has investigated the active location and has determined there is no threat.*

System Supervisory "Zone 3": Indicates that some monitored device has been tampered with or may be malfunctioning.

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Example: Water shut-off tamper switch. A supervised signal will not reset if the device is still impaired.

System Trouble “Zone 4”: Some fire safety device in the system is experiencing problems.

Example: Dirty smoke detector head, ground fault, etc. Trouble indicates that a single device is impaired but that the fire system is still functional.

Invalid Reply/Alarm (at Fire Panel): When an "invalid" notification appears on the fire panel it indicates that a device cannot be found by the fire system.

Example: Student removes a smoke detector head in dorm room. The device location will be noted on the fire panel read-out and should be inspected by the responding CSO. If further assistance is needed contact Physical Plant (business hours), or aintenance On-Call (after hours).

System Trouble “Test”: A chronic system trouble may be placed in “Test” for 8 hours after a CSO or Facilities Maintenance personnel has identified the problem. If all are in agreement that the persistent trouble cannot be immediately resolved, Facilities Maintenance may place the alarm in Test for 8 hours or until repairs can be made. After 8 hours, if the problem persists, Facilities Maintenance may reinstate Test for another 8 hours and notify Dispatch of this extension.

Alarm Panel in “Test”: This is something that is exclusively done by Facilities Maintenance. Such as when an entire building is being remodeled and worked on. The entire system (for a building) is in Test.

Notification: A general term that Facilities Maintenance and dispatchers have agreed upon as a way to refer to all signals coming into the alarm/notification monitoring software at dispatch. Because using the term “alarm” tends to make people *alarmed*, and because most signals we receive are not actually alarms (bells and strobes in a building), this is a better descriptor for all such signals.

**Fire Systems:
Notification and Response**

Note: If “water flow” and “general fire” alarms come into dispatch together call the fire department immediately (911), dispatch CSO(s), and call Facilities!

Water Flow: (Alarm notification).

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- 1) Acknowledge and verify location.
- 2) Dispatch CSO to location.
- 3) CSO inspect location for water discharge.
- 4) If water flow is caused by fire, call Portland Fire & Rescue and Facilities (911).
- 5) If water flow is from accidental cause, call Portland Fire & Rescue (911), CSO may attempt to shut off water at building sprinkler riser valve, call Facilities and silence alarm.
- 6) If water flow was caused by low air pressure on dry system, and no threat of fire exists, silence alarm and call Facilities.

Note: If “water flow” and “general fire” alarms come into dispatch together call the fire department immediately (911), dispatch CSO and call Facilities!

General Fire: (Alarm notification).

- 1) Acknowledge and verify location.
- 2) Dispatch CSO to location.
- 3a) CSO inspects location for threat of fire. If threat found call Portland Fire & Rescue (911) and Facilities.

Note: Do not silence alarm until threat of fire is verified or neutralized!

- 3b) If CSO finds false alarm, silence alarm and reset fire panel. If problem persists call Facilities and allow occupants back into building.