

# Duquesne University

## RED TAG PROGRAM

*Effective April 1, 2006  
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Prepared by: Environmental Health and Safety Department

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### **Purpose**

This program is to provide a safe environment in University buildings and on University premises when the fire protection system is taken out of service for maintenance, renovation, new construction or equipment failure. During this period of impairment, the risk of fire and property damage increases significantly.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) prohibit impairment unless appropriate steps are taken to minimize fire hazard.

### **Scope**

This program applies to all employees and contracted/sub-contracted personnel who perform or are authorized to perform any work which may require fire protection impairment at the University. All such work requires an approved Red Tag Permit on site signed by the Department or Project Supervisor responsible for the project. Departments requiring such work are responsible for ensuring that adequate controls and procedures are in place before impairment is initiated.

### **Responsibilities:**

Administration - Duquesne University has the overall responsibility for providing a place of employment free of recognized hazards and unsafe conditions, as well as complying with federal, state, and local standards and regulations.

The Deans, Directors or Department Heads - Have the overall responsibility of ensuring that all pertinent personnel are provided with the required equipment and resources to conduct safe fire impairment work operations. They must also ensure that safety equipment and training are made available to each worker involved in fire impairment operations.

Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S)- Has the responsibility of ensuring local, state, federal and insurance company compliance with the Red Tag Program and the responsibility for guidance and technical expertise needed to oversee the program. Responsibilities also include providing training for affected personnel.

Department Supervisor (whose employee(s) engage in Red Tag work) - Ensures that all aspects of this Program are implemented and hazards are controlled so not to present a hazardous exposure to University employees, students and visitors. It is also the responsibility of Department Supervisors to ensure the employee(s) designated to perform fire impairment work utilizes the necessary procedures and equipment to minimize that employee's own exposure to the fire hazards generated. Responsibility

also includes ensuring that all equipment is maintained in a safe operational manner. They have the responsibility to issue Red Tag Permits and ensure the Permits are completed prior to start of work.

University Employee(s) (engaged in Red Tag work) -Are responsible for following this Program and implementing controls that will eliminate or greatly reduce the fire hazards generated by their work for the protection of themselves, University employees, students and visitors. Personnel using tools or equipment for fire impairment work are also responsible for ensuring that equipment is in proper working order, the work site is made fire safe prior to start of work, and the area is made fire safe prior to leaving the work area.

Fire Watch - Is responsible for ensuring that safe conditions are maintained during fire impairment operations and for reporting all fires that have developed regardless if it was extinguished or not. The fire watch has the authority to stop the fire impairment work operation if an unsafe condition develops.

Project Supervisor(s) for Outside Contractor(s) - Are responsible for ensuring outside contractors and sub-contractors involved in fire impairment work have and follow a Hot Work Program or comply with the provisions of this Program. Advise all outside contractors about flammable materials or hazardous conditions of which they may not be aware.

## **Requirements before Impairment**

The basic precautions before fire system impairment work operations are:

- A. Plan to perform work when the facility is not in operation and/or shutdown any hazardous operations/processes, if possible.
- B. Have equipment, parts, personnel, etc. in place before impairing the fire protection system.
- C. Maintain suitable fire extinguishing equipment in a state of readiness for instant use. Such equipment may consist of pails of water, buckets of sand, hose or portable extinguishers depending upon the nature and quantity of the combustible material exposed.
- D. Establish a Fire Watch. Fire watchers must have fire extinguishing equipment readily available and be trained in its use. They must be familiar with the procedure for sounding an alarm in the event of a fire. They must watch for fires in all exposed areas, try to extinguish them only when obviously within the capacity of the equipment available, or otherwise sound the alarm. A continuous fire watch must be maintained for at least 1-hour after the completion of operations to detect and extinguish possible smoldering fires.
- E. Inspection of the area by the Department Supervisor responsible for authorizing red tag work operations. He/she will designate precautions to be followed in granting authorization to proceed in the Red Tag Work Permit.
- F. Ensure that someone is available and prepared to restore the fire control system promptly in the event of a fire, if the system can be restored.
- G. Notify FM Global (1-888-216-9330) and University Public Safety (x 6002).

## **Requirements during Impairment**

- A. Shutdown hazardous processes.
- B. Prohibit smoking.
- C. Prohibit all hot work. If hot work is required, discuss in advance with EH&S.
- D. Have fire watches patrol the areas in which fire protection is impaired.
- E. Continue work until impairment is removed.

- F. Implement usage of the Red Tag Permit and the Impairment Tag.

### **Requirements after Impairment**

- A. Place Fire Protection Equipment back into automatic service.
- B. Conduct a 2-inch drain test at the sprinkler riser if the sprinkler system was impaired.
- C. Lock sprinkler control valve in the wide open position.
- D. Reset the alarm system.
- E. Notify Public Safety that the system is unimpaired.
- F. Complete Red Tag Permit and return the Impairment Tag to the kit.

### **Outside Contractor(s) & Sub-Contractors**

Project Supervisor(s) are responsible for ensuring outside contractors and sub-contractors involved in fire impairment operations on University premises have and follow a Red Tag Program or comply with the provisions of this Program.

- A. Outside contractors and sub-contractors are responsible for ensuring their employees are adequately trained in all aspects of conducting red tag work safely.
- B. Outside contractors and sub-contractors are required to provide the appropriate length of fire watch for all red tag operations.
- C. After completing the red tag operation and the appropriate fire watch, the outside contractor and sub-contractors are responsible for ensuring that building alarms and fire detection and extinguishing systems are operational before leaving the site.

### **Off-Hours, 2<sup>nd</sup> Shift and Night-Turn**

If the immediate supervisor responsible for the red tag work project is available during off-hours, 2<sup>nd</sup> shift and/or night-turn, he/she must issue the Red Tag Work Permit prior to work being initiated. If the immediate supervisor is not available, it is the responsibility of the person performing the Red Tag work to complete the Red Tag Work Permit in its entirety and conduct a fire watch according to this Program. Once the work and the fire watch have been completed, the person conducting the work must return the completed Red Tag Permit to their immediate supervisor. It is the immediate supervisor's responsibility to return the completed Red Tag Permit to the EH&S Department.

### **Unplanned Impairments**

In the event that an unplanned impairment occurs:

- A. Stabilize the situation and immediately follow the procedures listed above under "Requirements before Impairment".
- B. Ensure that the sprinkler valves are opened immediately if a fire starts.
- C. Immediately send the sprinkler valve operator(s) to the Valve(s) controlling the fire area, **IF** it is safe to do so.

The valve operator's job is to guard against premature shutting of the valve, unlock the valve and test it to ensure that the valve is open, stand near the valve during a fire and close it only on the fire chief's instruction, stand near the valve after the fire until sprinklers have been replaced, and reopen the valve, conduct drain testing, and lock the valve open.

## **Training**

It is expected that any University employee engaged in red tag work has received training and developed the skills necessary to conduct red tag work in a safe and professional manner. The EH&S Department will train and consult with any employee, at the request of their supervisor, on the topic of personal and fire safety as it relates to red tag work.

All supervisors and employees engaged in red tag work operations will also be trained on the provisions and guidelines of this Program and in the completion of the Red Tag Permit.

This Program will be reviewed at least annually and updated when deemed necessary.