



Sprinkler Impairment Management

RISK MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE



Introduction

For property risks, correctly designed, installed and maintained automatic sprinklers are recognised as providing the most comprehensive and reliable form of fire protection.

For this reason, most sprinklered risks are visited annually by AXA sprinkler Business Resilience Managers to ensure the installed systems are still suitable for the fire challenge presented and to test the water supplies.

There will be times when a sprinkler system becomes inoperative or needs to be taken out of service, either partially or completely, during which time the fire protection given will be 'impaired' to a lesser or greater degree.

The duration of an impairment will vary depending on the nature and severity of the reason but reinstatement of the system as soon as possible should be a priority. For example, sourcing of replacement parts for a defective fire pump could be up to eight weeks if coming from European or longer from American manufacturers. Another example would be draining, relining and refilling a water storage tank which could take five days.





Causes

The reason for sprinkler system impairments generally fall into three types as follows:

1. Planned Impairment

This will be a scheduled shutdown or partial isolation of the system to undertake modifications or repairs and should be planned to minimise the disruption time.

2. Emergency Sprinkler Impairment

This will be an unscheduled and unexpected event such as a forklift truck damaging an in-rack sprinkler head necessitating in the system or parts of the system being drained down and inoperative until repaired.

3. Improper Impairment

Often referred to as 'hidden impairments', these will occur accidentally or maliciously such as unauthorised isolation of the water supplies at a control valve. These are the most challenging impairments and may go unnoticed for some time until discovery by routine self-inspections, an insurance survey or by a sprinkler contractor during annual maintenance visits.



Notification of sprinkler impairment

AXA Insurance should be notified at least 48 hours before a planned impairment that will render any part of your sprinkler system inoperative for more than eight consecutive hours. This is so it excludes routine short duration general maintenance.

In the event of an emergency impairment or discovery of an improperly impaired system, AXA Insurance must be notified as soon as possible.

Notification to the AXA Sprinkler Impairment Desk should be done using the [sprinkler system impairment form](#) and sending this to sprinklersupport.ins@axa-insurance.co.uk

On receipt of the sprinkler system impairment form, the details will be reviewed by our AXA sprinkler Business Resilience Managers who can offer further technical input or assistance where required.

Sprinkler System Impairment

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AXA Insurance should be notified immediately on restoration of the system.

URN (see weekly test card)

Postcode

Company name

Site address

Impairment location
(where possible attach block plan indicating area affected or valve No.):

Contact name

Job title

Email address

Telephone number

System impaired (check box)

Description of impairment:

Valve set

☐

Water supply

☐

Sprinkler head

☐

Pipework

☐

Reason for impairment

Sprinkler contractor

Impairment start date

Impairment start time

Impairment end date

Impairment end time

Precautions taken

Yes

No

Has the local Fire and Rescue Service been notified?

☐

☐

Additional security / fire watch?

☐

☐

Additional firefighting equipment provided?

☐

☐

Managers and supervisors informed?

☐

☐

Hazardous operations and hot work activities suspended?

☐

☐

Will repairs be carried out during normal working hours?

☐

☐

Further details attached?

☐

☐

Restoration notification

Date:

Time:

Signed:

Additional comments

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Precautions

The following basic precautionary steps will help to minimise the risks:

- Undertake a risk assessment and appoint a responsible person to co-ordinate and supervise the impairment
- Notify relevant stakeholders (insurer, Fire & Rescue Service, alarm monitoring service, other building occupiers, property owner etc.) at the start and end of an impairment
- Notify site managers, supervisors and fire wardens of the impairment
- Provide additional security and fire watch inspections during the impairment
- Provide additional firefighting equipment and ensure staff are trained in its use
- Suspend hazardous processes during the impairment
- Suspend any Hot Work activities during the impairment





Precautions

You should also:

- Affix warning notices/tags to the relevant protection equipment to indicate it's out of service
- Where possible reinstate the system overnight
- Ensure the work to rectify or repair the system is undertaken swiftly by an approved contractor
- Restore the protection and verify that it's operational by appropriate testing after the necessary work is completed and ensure all valves are fully secured, open and system monitoring is operational
- Notify all relevant stakeholder once the system has been fully restored

The AXA Sprinkler Impairment Desk will monitor the planned reinstatement date specified on the impairment form to confirm whether the system has been fully restored or if an extension is necessary.





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