A. POLICY
To establish procedures to be followed when a fire protection system (sprinkler system, standpipe, fire alarm systems, special extinguishing system, fire pump, fire protection water supply) is taken out of service for construction, alteration, or due to an emergency condition. Procedures set forth in this policy do not apply to routine scheduled maintenance or testing.

B. PURPOSE
The purpose of this policy is to safeguard life and property at Alvernia University from the hazards of fire arising from storage, handling or use of materials or equipment, and from conditions hazardous to life and property.

C. APPLICABILITY
This plan applies to all staff and all outside contractors having access to Alvernia University fire protection systems.

D. DEFINITIONS
“Hot Work” means any operation producing flame, sparks or heat including cutting, welding, brazing, grinding, sawing, torch soldering, thawing frozen pipes, applying roof covering etc.

“Hot Work Area” means the area exposed to sparks, hot slag, radiant heat, or convective heat as a result of the “Hot Work”.

“Fire Watch” means a trained individual who monitors the work area for the beginnings of potential, unwanted fire. Individuals must be trained and familiar with the operation of portable fire extinguishers and methods to activate building fire alarm systems.

E. IMPAIRMENT PROCEDURES
The individual who is responsible for the shutting of any valves that control either sprinkler systems or the water to the sprinkler system will follow the following steps:

Prior to Shutting the Valve:
1. Request permission from the Alvernia University Maintenance Supervisor at 610-796-8238 to close a valve and shut the system down
2. Notify the Alvernia University Safety Technician at 610-796-8231. The Safety Technician will notify the University’s insurance carrier, Alvernia University Public Safety, and the City of Reading Fire Marshal. Be sure to give the following information:
   • The name of the building(s) where the system will be impaired
   • The time and date that the impairment will begin
   • The type of system that will be impaired (smoke/heat/etc. alarm; wet/dry sprinkler system)
   • The nature of the impairment
   • The anticipated time and date that the system is expected to be returned to normal

Upon Shutting the Valve:
1. Fill out the top and the bottom parts of the red Fire Protection Impairment tag and attach the top part only to the valve. Detach and keep the bottom part.
2. Alvernia University Public Safety personnel or another qualified individual will perform a Fire Watch in the affected building(s). The City of Reading Fire Marshal has specified Fire Watch guidelines that shall be followed. See the following section for the guidelines.

3. “Hot Work” operations are not permitted in sprinklered buildings while such protection is impaired unless permission is granted by the City of Reading Fire Marshal prior to the start of any “Hot Work”

4. Other high-hazard activities such as spray painting, flammable liquid use or transfer, gas mixing, and smoking are not permitted in sprinklered buildings while such protection is impaired.

5. If the system impairment is expected to extend beyond 5:00pm during a normal workday (Monday through Friday), notify the Alvernia University Safety Technician at 610-796-8231 as soon as possible. The Safety Technician shall notify the City of Reading Fire Marshal’s office of the status of the impairment.

When the System is Restored to Normal:
1. Conduct main drain tests to verify that all sprinkler system control valves are open.
2. Ensure that all fire protection equipment is restored to automatic mode.
3. Notify the Alvernia University Maintenance Supervisor and the Alvernia University Safety Technician. The Safety Technician will inform the University’s insurance carrier, Alvernia University Public Safety, and City of Reading Fire Marshal.
4. Complete the top part of the red Fire Protection Impairment tag and remove the tag from the valve. Give the completed top part of the tag to the Alvernia University Safety Technician for filing.

F. FIRE WATCH GUIDELINES
The following guidelines shall be adhered to at all times regarding Fire Watch:

1. The person assigned to do Fire Watch shall be responsible, alert and awake at all times.
2. The person assigned to do Fire Watch shall have a reliable means of communication to contact 911 (ie. cell phone) with them at all times.
3. The person assigned to do the Fire Watch shall keep a log indicating times of patrol in the building, areas patrolled in the building, conditions observed in the building, and each entry shall be dated, time noted, and printed name and signature to each entry. Contact the Alvernia University Public Safety Department at 610-796-8350 for Fire Watch log forms.
4. The person assigned to do the Fire Watch shall have access to all areas of the building, and the person shall have keys to all secured areas. The entire building shall be patrolled hourly, including but not limited to, the basement and all floors. The person assigned to do the Fire Watch shall have a functioning flashlight in their possession.
5. City of Reading Deputy Fire Chiefs and Fire Marshal’s office personnel may stop at any time to verify that the Fire Watch is complied with.
6. When the Fire Watch is completed, a copy of the Fire Watch log will be forwarded to the City of Reading Fire Marshal’s office. The original log sheet will be kept in the Alvernia University Public Safety files. The log can be sent to the Fire Marshal’s office via fax (610-655-6395), scanned and emailed, or hand delivered.
Note: Noncompliance with the above guidelines may subject Alvernia University to fines and penalties as per the City of Reading’s Building and Fire Prevention Codes, as well as the complete vacating of all structure(s) affected by the lack of code-required fire protection / detection systems.

G. REFERENCES
1. NFPA 1 Uniform Fire Code
2. NFPA 25 Maintenance of Water Based Fire Protection Systems
3. NFPA 72 Fire Alarm Code
5. 2006 International Fire Code
6. Fire Marshall Todd Iaeger, City of Reading (PA) Department of Fire & Rescue Services
7. The PMA Insurance Group