

Town of Beaufort  
Fire Department  
Business Pre-Inspection  
Check List

This is a brief list of some of the most common fire code and life safety violations that are found. Correcting as many of these problems will make your business safer for you, your employees, and your customers. This would also assist the Fire Inspector when doing an inspection.

**1. Access and Addressing**

- a. Fire apparatus access roads shall not be obstructed in any manner, including parking of vehicles. Signs may be required to maintain access. (aka. Fire Lane – No Parking)
- b. All buildings shall have approved numbers or addresses placed in a position that is plainly legible and visible from the street or road fronting the property. Numbers or alphabet letters shall be a minimum of 4" high and be of a contrasting color with their background.

**2. Aisles, Exits, and Stairs**

- a. Aisles, exits, and stairs must be maintained open, continuous and unobstructed.
- b. Exit signs and emergency lighting are required. (backup power supply required).
- c. Exit signs shall be illuminated at all times. (self-luminous, externally or internally illuminated).
- d. Exit doors shall not be locked, chained, bolted, barred, latched. or otherwise rendered unusable while the building is occupied.
- e. Storage is not permitted in stairway enclosures or beneath exit stairways.
- f. Fire doors shall not be blocked open or obstructed.

**3. Mechanical and Electrical Rooms**

- a. Storage of combustibles is not permitted in mechanical or electrical rooms.
- b. A clear working space of not less than 30" wide, 36" deep, and 78" high shall be provided in front of electrical service boxes.
- c. All electrical breakers or fuses shall be legibly and durably marked to indicate its purpose.
- d. Taped open breakers are prohibited. Breakers are not to be used as switches. All empty breaker spaces shall be covered with a blank cover. Panel doors and covers shall be kept closed.

**4. Hot Water Heaters**

- a. Hot water heaters must be kept free from combustible storage: 24" clearance minimum must be maintained in front of water heaters. Side and rear clearance must be in accordance with manufacture's installation instructions.
- b. Storage is not allowed within 24" of the top of a water heater.

## **5. Fire Extinguishers**

- a. All businesses are required to have a fire extinguisher. The size and type will be determined by the Fire Inspector.
- b. All fire extinguishers must have a service tag, be fully charged, and be inspected annually.
- c. Extinguishers must be installed in conspicuous locations and be readily accessible. The top of the extinguisher shall not be mounted over 60" high from the floor.

## **6. Extension Cords & Multiple Electrical Adaptors**

- a. Extension cords cannot run through walls, ceilings, door jams, window casings or under carpets.
- b. Extension cords may not be used in lieu of permanent wiring. A listed power tap may be used with the approval to the Fire Marshall.
- c. An extension cord may be used to supply power to one portable appliance, provided it meets or exceeds the rated capacity of the appliance being used. The extension cord shall be in good condition.

## **7. Temporary Wiring**

- a. Temporary wiring is allowed for a period not to exceed 90 days. (example: decorative lighting).

## **8. Flammable and Combustible Liquids, Paints, or Thinners**

- a. Approved storage cabinets may be required to store flammable liquids in excess of 10 gallons.
- b. Dispensing of flammable liquids from a gravity flow storage tank is not permitted.
- c. Flammable liquids cannot be stored near heating appliances or near exit passages, exit doors or stairways.
- d. Cleaning rags or cloths soiled with flammable or combustible liquids must be kept in a metal container with a tight fitting or spring-loaded lid.

## **9. Storage of Stock or Trash**

- a. Stock piles shall be orderly. Aisles are to be maintained throughout the stock room.
- b. Stock shall not be closer than 24" to the ceiling in a non-sprinklered building or 18" below the sprinkler head in sprinklered buildings.
- c. Storage of stock is not allowed in exit passages or under stairways.
- d. Combustible trash must be removed from buildings at least daily.

## **10. Commercial Cooking Hood Systems**

- a. Any fire extinguishing system must be serviced, tagged and dated every 6 months.

- b. Hoods, ducts, flues, filters and cooking surfaces must be kept clean and free of grease accumulation.

**11. Fire Department Connections, Standpipes and Sprinkler System**

- a. All sprinkler and standpipe systems must be functional at all times.
- b. Fire Dept. must be notified whenever work is to be done on the sprinkler system.
- c. Sprinkler system shut off valves must be locked or chained in the OPEN position at all times.
- d. All sprinkler and standpipe systems shall be inspected, tested and certified annually. A certificate on completion shall be forwarded to the Fire Department.

**12. Fire Alarm System**

- a. All fire alarm systems as well as early warning devices must be functional at all times.
- b. All fire alarm systems will be required to be inspected, cleaned, and tested on an annual basis. A certificate of completion shall be forwarded to the Fire Department

**13. No Smoking Area**

- a. Due to the hazardous nature of some stored materials or the hazards of certain industrial processes the Fire Marshall may designate a "No Smoking" area. Signs shall be posted in these areas and the "no smoking" ban shall be enforced by the management.

**14. Occupancy Loads**

- a. In places of assembly, dining, drinking or the like, occupancy loads will be determined by the Fire Marshall and "Occupancy Load" signs shall be posted. Management has the responsibility to enforce the occupancy load limit.
- b. Extra chairs or standing room shall not be permitted in aisles or exit passages.

**15. Decorative Vegetation**

- a. Natural cut trees shall be prohibited in Assemblies, Educational occupancies, and Mercantile occupancies.

Additional requirements may apply depending on occupancy use and size. Questions may be directed to the Fire Inspectors at 252 – 728 – 4325.