

Clay County Fire Marshal

345 Courthouse Drive

Hayesville, NC 28904

Office: 828-389-0274

Commercial Occupancy/Annual Inspection Checklist

Regular Inspections by your local Fire Marshal or Fire Inspector are a part of doing business, and you need to be ready when they arrive. Since these visits are unannounced, the best way to remain prepared is to go through the attached checklist yourself, to ensure that your business is in full compliance with the fire code at all times. This will not only help you to avoid expensive fines or even having your business shut down temporarily due to code violations, it can also protect your staff, property, or even your livelihood.

While you may not give it much thought, a fire can be devastating to any business. In fact, more than 40% of businesses that suffer a significant fire close permanently. To help you avoid this type of disastrous scenario, it is important to remain in compliance with the regulations which can keep your business protected.

1. The following is a list of things that the Fire inspector will be checking when completing the inspection. This list is the main items that will be checked but may not include all items. Please refer to 2018, IBC, IFC, and IRC for all code requirements.
2. Inspections will be completed upon Fire Marshal or Inspector availability. A minimum of 48 hours is required.
3. Inspection Fees are based on Occupancy type. A copy of the approved Fee Schedule per occupancy type may be viewed on the Clay County Fire Marshals' web site.
4. A \$25 fee will be charged for every reinspect required after the initial failed inspection.
5. All permit, inspection, and reinspection fees must be paid before any inspections or re-inspections can be scheduled.
6. An approved 911 address can be obtained by calling Clay County 911 Dispatch at 828-389-9485

Inspection

During your inspection, we will inspect your business for compliance with the current NC Fire codes and fire safety standards. Below is a list of common items we check, this list is not "all-inclusive" and is designed to help assist you in preparing for your inspection. Specific occupancies and use groups may have stricter requirements. If you have questions regarding compliance, please contact our office prior to the inspection to avoid potential failure of inspection.

DIAL 911 FOR EMERGENCY

1. General

1.1. 911 Addressing

- 1.1.1. 911 Addresses shall be posted on the street side of the building, be visible, contrasting in color, and be at least 6 inches in size.
- 1.1.2. 911 addresses if not obtained can be obtained by contacting 911 dispatch at the number found at the top section of the page.

1.2. Structural Conditions

- 1.2.1. The structure shall not have any signs of deterioration or damage that could have the potential for collapse or imminent danger to occupants.
- 1.2.2. There shall be no holes in the walls, ceilings, floors, or concealed areas.
- 1.2.3. Any penetrations in walls, ceilings, floors, etc. should be properly sealed or filled. If penetrating a fire-rated assembly, the sealant or covering shall meet the rating requirements of the original fire-rated assembly.
- 1.2.4. All ceiling tiles or panels shall be in place.

1.3. Housekeeping/Storage

- 1.3.1. No excessive waste or housekeeping issues shall be present.
- 1.3.2. Storage rooms and areas shall be clean and orderly.
- 1.3.3. Stored items, furniture, appliances, or other materials shall not block hallways, doors, stairwells, or any means of egress unless approved by the Fire Marshal
- 1.3.4. Storage shall be at least 18 inches from sprinkler heads and 24 inches from the ceiling in non-sprinklered buildings.

2. Means of Egress, Exits, Emergency Lighting, and Fire Doors

2.1. Means of Egress

- 2.1.1. No means of egress shall be locked, blocked, diminished, disabled, or hindered in any way that would prevent occupants' safe and efficient exit from the building.

2.2. Exits (Including Exit Doors)

- 2.2.1. Exit doors and exit access shall be free of obstructions.
- 2.2.2. Exit discharge shall be unobstructed and exit into a safe area or public way.
- 2.2.3. Exit door and hardware shall be operational.
- 2.2.4. Exit doors shall be unlocked and operate from the interior without the use of a key.
- 2.2.5. Exit doors shall swing in the direction of egress for areas with an occupant load of 50+ or occupancies of Group H use.

2.3. Emergency Lighting

- 2.3.1. Emergency lighting shall be required for all emergency exits and other locations required by the codes and ordinances.
- 2.3.2. Emergency lighting shall be lighted unless approved by the Fire Marshal
- 2.3.3. Emergency lighting shall be hardwired with battery backup or battery-operated.
- 2.3.4. Hard-wired emergency lights shall operate on the battery-backup when activated and should maintain a lighting level (Not dim from a low battery)

2.4. Fire Doors (If present)

- 2.4.1. Fire doors shall be rated for the occupancy and use group, in the correct location, and operate as designed.

DIAL 911 FOR EMERGENCY

3. Fire Extinguishers

- 3.1. Fire extinguishers must be appropriate type for the type of occupancy for example:
 - 3.1.1. Class ABC for general businesses
 - 3.1.2. Class K for commercial kitchen appliances
- 3.2. Extinguishers must be adequately spaced within the occupancy. Travel distance to a fire extinguisher shall not be more than 75 feet in most occupancies. Special occupancies such as Group H (Hazardous) refer to IFC, IBC, and IRC for specific travel distances.
- 3.3. Extinguishers shall not be obstructed physically or from view by any walls, doors, furniture, etc.
- 3.4. Extinguishers shall be placed conspicuously and in plain view.
- 3.5. Extinguishers shall be mounted on a bracket and have a sign indicating the location.
- 3.6. Fire extinguishers shall be serviced annually and the current service tag shall be attached to the extinguisher.
- 3.7. Class K extinguishers shall be required within 30 feet of the commercial cooking area.

4. Electrical Wiring, Breaker Panels, and other Electrical Components

4.1. Electrical Wiring

- 4.1.1. Wiring and other electrical equipment components shall be in good condition with no exposed wiring or electrical hazard present.
- 4.1.2. Electrical equipment shall be UL listed and approved.
- 4.1.3. Outlets and switches shall be in good condition with covers securely in place.
- 4.1.4. GFCI-protected outlets shall be used in areas where exposure to water is possible including but not limited to the following:
 - 4.1.4.1. Within 6 feet of water
 - 4.1.4.2. Kitchens
 - 4.1.4.3. Bathrooms
 - 4.1.4.4. Garages
 - 4.1.4.5. Pool Areas

4.2. Extension Cords

- 4.2.1. Extension cords shall be in good condition with no visible damage.
- 4.2.2. Extension cords shall not be used as permanent wiring.
- 4.2.3. Extension cords shall not be used in walkways without appropriate covers or safety measures in place.

4.3. Power Strips/Outlet Strips

- 4.3.1. Power strips shall be in good condition with no visible damage.
- 4.3.2. Power strips shall not be “daisy-chained” (One power strip plugged into another power strip.)

4.4. Breaker Panels

- 4.4.1. Breaker panels shall be in good condition with no damage.
- 4.4.2. Breaker panels shall have no open breaker positions.
 - 4.4.2.1. If open breaker positions exist, they must be covered by a blank designed for a breaker panel.
- 4.4.3. Breaker panels shall have no tripped breakers.
- 4.4.4. Breaker panels shall have no tape, paper, or other combustible material on the breaker panel switches
- 4.4.5. There shall be a 36" clearance in front of, and a 30" clear area to either side of the panel.
- 4.4.6. Breaker panels shall not have any material including ties, tape, wire, etc. holding breaker switches in the on position preventing the breaker switch from tripping.

5. Fire Alarm/Detection Systems, Suppression Systems, and Smoke Alarms

5.1. Fire Alarm System

- 5.1.1. If present, Fire Alarm Systems shall be in operational condition.
- 5.1.2. Owners shall have on file, alarm company name and contact information.
- 5.1.3. All fire alarm components shall be installed within approved locations and be in good condition.

5.2. Suppression Systems

5.2.1. Sprinkler System

- 5.2.1.1. If present, Sprinkler systems shall be in operating condition with no visible damage.
- 5.2.1.2. Inspection, testing, and maintenance records shall be available for inspection by the fire inspector .
- 5.2.1.3. Sprinkler systems shall be inspected and serviced annually with current inspection tags visible or available for inspection by the fire inspector.
- 5.2.1.4. No items shall be suspended or hung from the sprinkler head at any time.
- 5.2.1.5. Sprinkler heads shall be in good condition and free of debris.
- 5.2.1.6. Sprinkler heads shall have at least 18 inches of clearance.
- 5.2.1.7. Fire Department Connections (FDC) shall be in operational condition.
- 5.2.1.8. FDCs shall be marked with signage and be unobstructed.

5.2.2. Hood Systems (Commercial Kitchens)

- 5.2.2.1. Hood systems shall be in good condition and operational.
- 5.2.2.2. Hood systems shall be inspected and cleaned by use frequency according to the IFC, IBC, and IRC.
- 5.2.2.3. Inspection, testing, and maintenance records shall be available for inspection by the fire inspector.

5.3. Smoke Alarms

- 5.3.1. If no fire alarm system is present or required, smoke alarms shall be placed in each room of the structure unless otherwise specified by the Fire Marshal and shall be tested annually by approved testing agency and provide test result documentation.
- 5.3.2. Smoke alarms shall be in good condition and operational.
- 5.3.3. If new smoke alarms are being installed, interconnected smoke alarms are recommended.
- 5.3.4. Smoke alarms older than 10 years are recommended to be replaced.

6. Administrative and Paperwork

6.1. Emergency Evacuation Plans, Maps, and Fire Drills

- 6.1.1. Emergency evacuation plans shall be required by specific occupancies and occupant loads as specified in the IFC, IBC, and IRC. (Chapter 4, 2012)
- 6.1.2. Emergency evacuation maps shall be required to be posted as specified in the IFC, IBC, and IRC. (Chapter 4, 2012) Business use groups are required to post evacuation maps if occupant load exceeds 500 persons total or 100 persons above or below the lowest level of exit discharge.
- 6.1.3. Fire drills shall be conducted as required for each use group as specified in IFC, IBC, and IRC. (Chapter 4, 2012)
- 6.1.4. Documentation of plans, maps, and fire drills shall be available for inspection by the fire inspector.

7. Miscellaneous

- 7.1. Flammable and combustible liquids shall be stored in approved containers and/or cabinets.
- 7.2. Compressed gas cylinders including restaurant CO2 cylinders shall be secured in an approved manner.
- 7.3. **Space Heaters**
 - 7.3.1. Space heaters shall be in good condition and free of damage.
 - 7.3.2. Space heaters shall be operated in an area free of combustible materials or hazards.
 - 7.3.3. Space heaters shall have a safety feature that disables the device if over heating or knocked over.

Any items found not meeting these criteria or code requirements at the time of inspection will result in an automatic failure.