

ST. JOHNS COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

Common Fire Code Violations Checklist

Business Owners or Managers may avoid some of the most common fire code violations by reviewing the requirements below. All are based on the current Florida Fire Prevention Code. In some cases there may be exceptions or exemptions that apply.

This is only a basic list that contains items common to all occupancy types. We have additional lists that cover common violations for specific occupancy types, please use both the basic list and whichever additional lists apply to your occupancy. The lists are not intended to address all code requirements that may apply.

- The **street address** must be clearly marked, and visible from the public roadway. (NFPA 1:10.13.1.2) Numbers or letters must be a minimum of six inches in height (minimum three inches for residential buildings), and in contrasting color from the background on which they will be placed.
- A **key vault** will be required for Fire Department access to all buildings that contain a monitored fire alarm or a fire sprinkler system. (NFPA 1:10.12.2) These boxes shall contain keys or other devices necessary for the fire department to gain access into a structure in the event of an emergency during non-business hours. You may contact the Fire Prevention office at (904) 209-1740, see our Forms & Resources link, or via e-mail at fireprev@co.stjohns.fl.us to obtain order forms for the key box.
- **Fire Hydrants**, if provided on your property, must be visible and accessible at all times. Hydrants shall not be obstructed by landscaping or other structures. It is required that there be at least three feet of clearance all the way around the hydrant. (NFPA 1:18.3.3.1)
- **Fire lanes** maintained free of obstructions (NFPA 1:17.3.7.2). This area cannot to be used for shopping carts or seasonal displays.
- Combustible waste cannot be allowed to build up inside or outside the building in any manner that will pose a fire hazard. For example, piles of empty cardboard boxes should not be allowed to pile up against the back wall of a business, especially near an exit. (NFPA 1:19.1.2)
- **Exit doors** require only one operation to open and open readily from the egress side. (NFPA 101:14.5.2.2) Occupants of the structure shall only have to operate one, if any, locking mechanisms to exit the building. Any such locking mechanism shall not require special knowledge, keys, or tools to operate.
- **Aisles, walkways, stairways, or other paths leading to exits** must be clear and unobstructed (NFPA 101:7.5.1.1.1*). Approved exits, or the pathways leading to them, must not be blocked by stock or merchandise at any time.
- **Emergency lights** and exit signs that are lighted from within work properly, exit signs work in both the normal and emergency power mode. (NFPA 101:7.10.5.1 and NFPA 101:7.9.2.2*)

Emergency lights and lighted exit signs are tested monthly, and written records of the testing are maintained. See our Forms and Resources link for checklists and more information on how to do the simple test of these devices.

- **Fire Extinguishers are normally required, and if provided** should be readily accessible and visible locations, not tucked inside offices, under counters or in closets. Please contact your fire extinguisher dealer for assistance in determining the proper number, type, and mounting locations for fire extinguishers. (NFPA 1:13.6.2)

- **Fire extinguishers**, even new ones, must be serviced and tagged annually by a licensed fire extinguisher dealer. (FAC-21.240) You can locate a licensed dealer under “Fire Extinguishers” in the yellow pages. (NFPA 1:13.3.3.8.3.3)

(NOTE: Even if you buy a brand new fire extinguisher from a discount or hardware store, it must still be inspected and tagged by a licensed dealer if it will be used in a place of business.)

- Extinguishers should also be checked monthly by employees, and a written log kept to ensure that they are in place, have not been tampered with, and have not lost pressure. This procedure can be more thoroughly explained by the fire inspector during your inspection. (NFPA 1:13.6.6.8.2.2)
- **Abandoned in place wiring** must be properly identified at juncture and termination or removed from all accessible areas and insulated (NFPA 1:11.1.14)
- Electrical outlets, junction boxes, and circuit breaker panels must be covered. Outlets and junction boxes must have the appropriate cover plate. Openings in circuit breaker boxes (such as from missing circuit breakers) must be covered by an appropriate plug. This will contain any sparks and arcs within the box to prevent starting a fire in nearby combustibles, and will also prevent persons from coming into contact with live electrical wires. (NFPA 70:370-25 and NFPA 70:370-27 (3) (c))
- **Electrical extension cords** cannot be used as a substitute for permanent wiring. If you do not have an electrical outlet close enough to an appliance, you must either have an electrician add a new outlet or move the appliance closer to the outlet. Extension cords are only approved for “temporary use”, such as to operate a vacuum cleaner, or to run a power tool while you make a repair. (If it’s plugged in for more than two weeks, don’t even think about calling it temporary!) If you have any mounted device, such as a light fixture, it must be wired by an electrician, and cannot be supplied by an extension cord. Under no circumstance can you staple an extension or other power cord to furniture or a wall. (Note: Multi-outlet power strips, with a built in circuit breaker, and with a cord not more than six feet in length, may be used to protect computers and related equipment. You cannot connect two of these cords together to obtain added reach.) (NFPA 1:11.1.5)
- **Elevators with firefighter service** have been tested monthly and records are on premises for review (NFPA 101-9.4.6)

For Those Occupancies Equipped with Fire Sprinkler, Standpipe, or Fire Alarm Systems:

- **Fire sprinkler or standpipe systems shall be serviced and tested at least annually** by a licensed fire protection contractor. The contractor will provide the owner with written records of the service and testing provided. It is the building owner’s responsibility to contact the sprinkler company and schedule these inspections when they are due. Unless a maintenance contract has been signed, the contractor will not automatically come out to perform these inspections. (NFPA 69A: 46.041)
- **Records** of inspections, tests, and maintenance of fire sprinkler systems shall be on site and available for review. Contractors are required to leave a report documenting all maintenance, testing, or repair work that has been performed on the system. As the owner / manager you should have copies of this paperwork on site for review by the county fire inspector. (NFPA 1:13.3.3.4)
- **Fire Department connections (FDC)** (the hose connections used by fire departments to pump extra water into fire sprinkler or standpipe systems) should be inspected and maintained regularly. (NFPA 25 9-7.1) The fire department connection should be checked to make sure that there are caps in place (to prevent garbage, etc. from being placed into the pipe and potentially clogging the system –possibly disabling the sprinkler or standpipe system in the event of a fire). The couplings should swivel easily so hoses can be connected easily. The area around the FDC shall be kept clear of obstructions at all times – it should be designated a “no parking” area and it shall be prohibited to pile stock or waste beneath or around the connection.

- **Fire alarms** shall be properly tested and maintained per NFPA 72. Fire alarms are required to be inspected, serviced and maintained annually by a licensed fire alarm contractor.(FS 633.701) Again, it is your responsibility to contact the fire alarm company to schedule these inspections when they are due. (NFPA 1:13.7.3.2.6.1)
- **Records of fire alarm maintenance, repair and inspection** shall be kept on site for the review of the AHJ. As with sprinkler contractors, fire alarm contractors are required to leave a report documenting all maintenance, testing, or repair work performed on the system. As the owner / manager you should have copies of this paperwork on site for review by the County fire inspector. (NFPA 1:13.7.3.2.6.1)