

COMMON FIRE SAFETY ISSUES

WELCOME TO THE CITY OF ST. FRANCIS!

The mission of the St. Francis Fire Department is to ensure fire safe environments and buildings for its citizens, its businesses, employees and patrons.

The St. Francis Fire Department shall be contacted 14 working days prior to the projected occupancy date to allow for an on-site fire safety inspection to be conducted and to discuss any fire safety concerns with you. This time frame should allow you enough time to meet any requirements that have to be addressed prior to occupancy. Once occupancy has been established, the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services direct us to inspect your property a minimum of twice a year with some exceptions.

The following are fire safety concerns that shall be addressed prior to taking occupancy of your establishment. Also included are fire safety concerns which are commonly found as issues during fire safety inspections. This is only a general guideline and not all inclusive.

Fire Extinguishers

- Fire extinguishers are required. They should be mounted on the wall near the exits with the top of the extinguisher not higher than 5 feet off the floor and no less than 4 inches above the floor. The type of business will determine what type, how many, and the location of the extinguishers. Please refer to AHJ for additional information.
- Monthly, a visual inspection shall be conducted and documented on the appropriate extinguisher tag.
- Annually, an inspection and maintenance shall be conducted by a qualified contractor and shall be re-tagged to document performance of this requirement.
- Extinguishers shall not be obstructed at any time and shall be accessible and ready for use at all times.

Exit Lights, Doors, Passages

- Exit signs must be located above required exit doors other than the main entrance. These lights shall be illuminated at all times. These signs must be visible from the general public area. If the sign is not visible, another directional exit sign with an arrow pointing at the appropriate exit shall be installed.
- Aisles leading to the exit doors must be a minimum width of 3 feet and kept clear at all times. ADA may require wider than 3 feet. Check with the city building inspector.
- Exit passages shall be illuminated in the event of power failure.
- Exit doors shall swing in the direction of egress; open easily using one operation by either turning a knob or pushing a bar during periods of occupancy.
- Monthly, emergency lighting shall be tested and documented.

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Electrical

- Three (3) feet minimum clearance in front of electrical panels shall be maintained at all times.
- Extensions cords shall not be used on a permanent basis. They are for temporary use only.
- Extension cords or power taps may not be connected (“plugged”) into each other.
- Power taps shall have overcurrent protection for amperage used and be listed.
- All boxes (receptacle, junction, etc.) shall be covered.
- No extension cords or power taps shall go through a wall, floor, and ceiling or under a door.
- All appliances shall be powered by its electrical cord into a wall receptacle.

General Fire Prevention

- All assembly areas shall have signage indicating Occupancy Load.
- Bollards: Private Hydrants shall be protected from vehicular traffic damage with bollards. The fire department shall determine the number of bollards needed.
- Access Box (SupraSafe) shall be installed at or near the main entrance (or where approved by AHJ) when a building is protected by a fire alarm, sprinkler or wet chemical (kitchen suppression) system. Call fire department for application.
- The Access Box shall contain the key(s) to gain entry to the building and any secured area within the building; each key to be labeled and all keys bound on one key ring. The Fire Department shall be notified in the event of any access changes (i.e. locks are changed).
- No combustibles should be stored in the furnace/boiler room. The furnace/boiler room door must have a self-closing device and the door must latch when released. If the heating unit is a direct vent sealed combustion chamber furnace this will not apply.
- No excess accumulation of combustible or flammable waste material will be stored on the premises. It must be removed within a 24 hour period.
- No Grills of any kind are allowed on any balcony or within 10 feet of the building. A grill shall be used on a non-combustible surface.
- There shall be no openings in a fire or smoke barrier. All penetrations shall be sealed to the required applicable fire rating.

Smoke / CO Detectors

- Monthly, CO detectors and Smoke detectors shall be inspected, tested and documented.
- Smoke detectors shall be replaced after 10 years from the manufacturing date.
- Smoke detector placement shall be determined by the AHJ with at least one detector per level of the building.
- Smoke detector battery shall be replaced at least every 6 months.

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- CO detector placement shall be required when a fuel-burning appliance is present (i.e. Natural Gas Appliance). CO detectors shall be placed in the basement, within 15 feet of each sleeping area, and 75 feet of the appliance in each common hallway. Additional requirements may apply; please refer to AHJ for additional information.

Fire & Smoke Doors (If Applicable)

- All fire/smoke doors shall be self-closing that swing freely, easily and shall latch completely.

Heating / Chimney (If Applicable)

- All Clothes dryers shall be exhausted to the outside. The exhaust duct shall be constructed of a rigid and smooth material (i.e. “stove pipe”).
- Three (3) minimum clearance around a furnace and a water heater appliance shall be maintained at all times.

Flammable Liquids (If Applicable)

- All compressed gas containers, cylinders and tanks shall be secured to prevent damage.
- No Class I flammable liquids (i.e. Gasoline, Propane) shall be stored in basements.
- If not protected by a sprinkler system, no Class II (i.e. Kerosene) and Class IIIA (i.e. linseed oil, mineral oil, oil-based paints) flammable liquids shall be stored in basements.
- There are maximum allowable quantities for Class I, Class II, and Class IIIA liquids per control area. Please refer to the AHJ for additional information.
- Storage in a residential building is limited to cylinders each with a maximum water capacity of 2.7 pounds and shall not exceed 5.4 pounds aggregate water capacity for smaller cylinders per each living space unit. Each cylinder shall meet DOT specifications.

Kitchen Suppression Systems (If Applicable)

- An inspection of the wet chemical system, and fusible link replacement, shall be completed every 6 months by a qualified contractor.
- An inspection for grease buildup in exhaust systems shall be either monthly, quarterly, semiannually or annually depending on the type and volume of cooking. Generally this will need to be completed every 6 months with some exceptions.
- A Class K fire extinguisher is required in the cooking area where a wet chemical system is required.

Fire Alarm Systems (If Applicable)

- Annually, a function test shall be completed and documented by a certified contractor.
- Monthly, a pull station test shall be completed and documented. This requires one pull-station per month with every pull-station to be tested at least once annually.

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Fire Sprinkler Systems (If Applicable)

- Weekly, monthly, quarterly, semiannual and annual inspection, testing and maintenance shall be completed by appropriate personnel. Annual maintenance shall be completed by a person with applicable credentials.
- Annual maintenance documentation shall be provided to the fire department.
- There are certain required inspections that must be done throughout the year. Some required inspections can be performed by on-site maintenance personnel if properly trained. The other inspections/tests must be done by licensed fire sprinkler personnel. The inspections must be documented and records kept in the sprinkler control room visible to our inspectors. Contact your fire sprinkler contractor for training and information.
- All deficiencies noted on inspection reports shall be corrected and documented.
- Annually, private fire hydrants shall be tested and documented.
- Sprinkler (Sprinkler Head) clearance shall be at least 18 inches at all times.

Central Station Monitoring (If Applicable)

- The alarm/sprinkler system must be connected to a 24-hour/7-day-a-week monitoring central station located off-premise and possess a **UL listing specifically for sprinkler and fire alarms.**
- The Fire Department shall be provided monitoring central station information including business name and contact number.

I am hopeful this clarifies any questions and concerns you have regarding the common fire safety requirements for occupancy compliance. I look forward to the opportunity to collaborate with you on our common goal of maximizing life safety and minimizing property loss due to fire. If I may be of further assistance to you please contact me at 414-483-4424 or peter.trost@stfranwi.org.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Peter Trost

Peter Trost, Captain
St. Francis Fire Prevention Bureau