

Preparing for a Fire Safety Inspection

Common Fire Code Violations



Dear Business Owner,

To better serve you and help promote life safety and prevent fire hazards in your business, the following information is provided to you on behalf of the League City Fire Marshal's Office. A list of Common International Fire Code (IFC - 2015) Violations could assist you in eliminating potential fire hazards within your place of business and remain compliant with the adopted fire codes. Should you have any questions concerning this information please do not hesitate to contact me.

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- 1. Addressing.** Numbers shall be provided for all new and existing buildings in such a position as to be plainly visible and legible from the street or road fronting the property. Numbers shall be a minimum of 4" high with contrasting background (IFC 505.1) LCFMO typically recommends a minimum of 6" high for visibility.
- 2. Combustibles too Close to the Ceiling.** In buildings with sprinklers, combustibles are to be at least 18" from below sprinkler head deflectors. In buildings without sprinklers, the minimum distance to the ceiling is 24". Also, do not store combustibles under unprotected stairways. (IFC 315.3.1)
- 3. Clearance from Ignition Sources.** Clearance between ignition sources, such as luminaries, heaters, flame-producing devices and combustible materials, shall be maintained in an *approved* manner (IFC 305.1) Minimum of 30" from propane or natural gas appliance and 18" from an electrical appliance.
- 4. Cooking Hood and Duct Cleaning.** Hoods, grease-removal devices, fans, ducts, and other appurtenances shall be cleaned at intervals necessary to prevent the accumulation of grease. Cleanings shall be recorded, and records shall state the extent, time, and date of cleaning. (IFC 609)
- 5. Cooking Hood and Duct Extinguishing System.** Dry chemical extinguishing systems shall be inspected and tested for proper operation at 6-month intervals. Clean agent systems shall be inspected and tested at 12-month intervals. (IFC 904)
- 6. Means of Egress.** Combustible material shall not be stored in exits or enclosures for stairways and ramps. (IFC - 315.3.2)
- 7. Electrical Panels.** A working space of not less than 30" in width, 36" in depth, and 78" in height shall be provided in front of electrical service equipment. The working space shall not be less than the width of the panel. Cover holes in electrical panels with blank plastic covers. Do not place tape over circuit breakers. (IFC 605.3) Doors into electrical control panel rooms shall be marked with a plainly visible and legible sign stating ELECTRICAL ROOM (IFC 605.3.1)
- 8. Emergency Lighting.** The bulb or bulbs must be lit when the test button is pushed. If the light(s) do not work, the battery may need to be replaced. (IFC 604.6)
- 9. Exit Signs.** All bulbs in exit signs need to function. Many exit signs are equipped with a battery back-up in case of loss of power. Push the test button on the side or bottom of the exit sign to check if the battery and D/C lights are operating. If not, it is probably the battery that needs replacing and not the bulbs. (IFC 1013)
- 10. Extension Cords.** Extension cords shall not be used as a substitute for permanent wiring. Extension cords shall not be affixed to structures, extend through walls, ceilings or floors, under doors or floor coverings, nor shall cords be subject to environmental damage or physical impact. (IFC 605.5)

11. **Extinguishers.** Service must be performed annually by a licensed fire extinguisher contractor. Most businesses need a minimum 2A size/type extinguisher for every 3,000 square feet. Occupants need to be within 75 feet of an extinguisher. Extinguishers need to be mounted three to five feet off the floor in a highly visible and accessible location. (IFC 906)
12. **Fire Alarm and Detection Systems. *Inspection, testing, and maintenance.*** The building *owner* shall be responsible to maintain the fire and life safety systems in an operable condition at all times. Records of inspections, testing, and maintenance shall be maintained. A monitored system needs to be serviced annually (IFC 907.8.5 and Chapter 10 of NFPA 72)
13. **Fire-Rated Doors.** These self-closing doors shall not be blocked open, obstructed, nor made inoperable. (IFC - 703.2)
14. **Fire Sprinkler Systems.** These systems need annual servicing. A maintenance tag is required to be placed on the sprinkler system. Keep a clear access to the riser and do not store items within three feet of riser system. (IFC 901)
15. **Key Box.** Where access to or within a structure or an area is restricted because of secured openings or where immediate access is necessary for life-saving or fire-fighting purposes, the *fire code official* is authorized to require a key box to be installed in an *approved* location. The key box shall be of an *approved* type listed in accordance with UL 1037, and shall contain keys to gain access as required by the *fire code official*. (IFC 506.1)
16. **Means of Egress - Obstruction.** Exit corridors minimum width (36") or required capacity of *corridors* shall be unobstructed. (IFC 1020.3)
17. **Open Junction Box.** Open junction boxes and open-wiring splices shall be prohibited. *Approved* covers shall be provided for all switch and electrical outlet boxes.
18. **Multiplug Adapters.** Surge protectors (power taps) shall not be plugged into another surge protector. They shall be equipped with over-current protection and must be plugged into a wall outlet. (IFC 605.4)
19. **Pressurized Cylinders.** Cylinders or tanks, whether empty or full, need to be chained/secured to prevent falling caused by contact or vibration. (IFC 5303.5.3)
20. **Identification.** Fire protection equipment shall be identified in an *approved* manner. Rooms containing controls for air-conditioning systems, sprinkler risers, and valves, or other fire detection, suppression, or control elements shall be identified for the use of the fire department. *Approved* signs required to identify fire protection equipment and equipment location shall be constructed of durable materials, permanently installed and readily visible. (IFC 509.1) Signs shall meet LCFMO specifications.
21. **Storage in Equipment/Electrical Rooms.** Combustible materials shall not be stored in boiler rooms, mechanical rooms, elevator rooms, electrical equipment rooms, or *fire command centers*. (IFC 515.3.3)
22. **Locks and Latches.** Group A 300 or less, Groups B, F, M & S, the main exit door, or doors are permitted to be equipped with a key operated locking device from the egress side. Visible sign – THIS DOOR TO REMAIN UNLOCKED WHEN SPACE IS OCCUPIED. (IFC 1010.1.9.3)
23. **Fire-Resistance-Rated Construction.** The required *fire resistance rating* of fire-resistance-rated construction, including, but not limited to, walls, firestops, shaft enclosures, partitions, *smoke barriers*, floors, fire resistive coatings and sprayed fire-resistant joint systems, shall be maintained. (IFC 703.1)
24. **Waste Accumulation.** Combustible waste material creating a fire hazard shall not be allowed to accumulate in buildings or structures or upon premises. (IFC 304.1)
25. **Operational Permits.** An Operational permit allows the applicant to conduct an operation or a business for which a permit is required. (IFC 105)