



**DALLAS FIRE-RESCUE DEPARTMENT**  
**Inspection & Life Safety Education**  
**Fire Code Requirements for**  
**Boarding Homes and Homeless Shelters**

1551 Baylor Street, Suite 400  
Telephone: (214) 670-4319  
FAX: (214) 670-4324

This checklist provides some of the basic regulations governing the operation of **Boarding Homes and Homeless Shelters**. It is not possible to cover all regulations. If you have a particular question of concern, please telephone or FAX the Dallas Fire-Rescue Department. The initial inspection is conducted at no charge. There is no charge for the first reinspection. The second reinspection is subject to a \$100.00 fee, with all reinspections after the second, subject to a \$105.00 fee.

**1. Permits**

- A. A valid certificate of occupancy from Building Inspection is required.
- B. Permit is required for welding and cutting operations, limited access gates, storage or use of flammable and combustible liquids, etc. Other permits may be required. Contact Dallas Fire-Rescue for more information.

**2. Exit Ways**

- A. Maintained unobstructed. All hallways, stairways, and stair landings shall be clear of obstructions or storage.
- B. Two exits, including emergency escape window or door, leading to the outside shall be provided for each sleeping room. Burglar bars on these exits shall be openable from the inside without a key.

**3. Fire Lanes and Access**

- A. Properly marked and clear of obstructions.
- B. Limited access control gates installed across fire lanes must be automatic and equipped with approved Dallas Fire-Rescue Department radio receivers, as well as a manual backup. Limited access control gates must be installed and maintained in accordance with the requirements of the Dallas Fire Code Section I104.

**4. Fire Extinguishers**

- A. Fire extinguishers shall be available for use by trained persons. One 2A-10BC extinguisher required for every 3,000 sq. ft. of floor space or within 75 ft. of travel. Special hazards may have additional requirements.
- B. Mounted in conspicuous accessible locations.
- C. Inspected for proper maintenance annually by licensed individuals.
- D. Must be recharged following use.

**5. Fire Alarm Systems**

- A. Installed in accordance with Chapter 9 of the Dallas Fire Code.
- B. Fire alarm systems installed, maintained, and approved prior to June 16, 2007 are considered to be in compliance with the Dallas Fire Code.
- C. Maintained in an operative condition at all times and replaced or repaired when defective. Immediately notify Dallas Fire-Rescue at 214-670-4319 if fire alarm system becomes non-operational.
- D. Written operating instructions provided and maintained at an approved location.
- E. Manual alarms and smoke alarms should be tested at least annually, and/or after modification.

**6. Single-Station Smoke Alarms**

- A. Single-station smoke alarms shall be located outside of each sleeping area within each dwelling unit and in each room used for sleeping purposes. Single-station smoke alarms shall not be required in each room used for sleeping purposes if the single-station smoke alarms were installed and approved prior to November 15, 1999 and are maintained.
- B. Single-station smoke alarms shall be mounted on the ceiling at least 4 inches from the wall, or mounted on the wall, at least 4, but not more than 12 inches from the ceiling.

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- C. Maintained in an operative condition at all times, and replaced or repaired when defective.

## **7. Sprinkler Systems**

- A. Maintained in approved working condition. Immediately notify Dallas Fire-Rescue at 214-670-4319 if sprinkler system becomes non-operational.
- B. Identify controls, drains, and test control valves with approved signage.
- C. Access to valves and/or fire department connections cannot be obstructed.
- D. A sprinkler wrench must be provided for each type of sprinkler head installed in the building. Spare sprinkler heads of the same types and ratings installed in the building must be provided for a system as follows:
  - (1) Less than 300 system heads, a minimum of 6 spare heads.
  - (2) 300 to 1,000 system heads, a minimum of 12 spare heads.
  - (3) Over 1,000 system heads, a minimum of 24 spare heads.
- E. Maintain an 18-inch clearance between sprinkler heads and storage.
- F. Test at least annually.

## **8. Kitchens**

- A. Automatic fire-extinguishing systems must be installed to protect commercial cooking equipment that produces grease-laden vapors.
- B. If vent hood has a fire-extinguishing system, one Class K extinguisher must be provided within 30 feet.
- C. Fire-extinguishing systems must be serviced at least every 6 months, and after activation.
- D. Maintain stove and vent hoods free of grease.

## **9. Miscellaneous**

- A. Address numbers shall be plainly visible from the street or road fronting the property.
- B. No storage is permitted within 2 feet of the ceiling.
- C. Electrical equipment and wiring shall be installed and maintained in accordance with the Electrical Code. Use of extension cords shall be limited and used only with portable appliances.
- D. Maintain on site an approved fire safety and evacuation plan, and conduct employee fire drills quarterly for each shift.
- E. Post fire safety and evacuation instructions and evacuation diagram on or immediately adjacent to each required egress door from each guestroom.
- F. All boarding houses, lodging houses, tenement houses, or similar places of abode must post signs stating "Any person who causes the accidental burning of any part of this building or its contents is subject to a fine of \$2,000.00. City of Dallas Fire Code."
- G. Provide cover plates for all electrical panels, outlets, boxes, and junctions.
- H. Gas water heaters must be properly vented to the outside and have safety relief valves.
- I. Vent clothes dryers to the outside, and clean lint from dryers and dryer vent ducts as often as necessary to prevent the accumulation of lint and dust.
- J. Heating and air conditioning features shall be clean and in good working condition.
- K. Keep at least 3 feet of clearance between combustible storage and heaters, water heaters, stoves, or fireplaces.
- L. Flammable liquids shall be limited to no more than a quantity for maintenance purposes. All flammable liquids shall be stored in approved containers.
- M. Matches and lighters shall be stored in a secured place and out of reach of children.