

Checklist to Help You Prepare for the Life-Safety Inspection

General Life-Safety

- The address must be clearly visible from the street to assist emergency services in locating the setting in an emergency. If there is no clear address, evidence of written notification to the local emergency services is maintained in the setting.
- The interior and exterior of the setting must be clean and free of damage that poses a hazard.
- Therapeutic & play equipment for individuals receiving care must be safe and in good repair.
- You must routinely remove garbage from the setting and you must have it removed from the premises at least weekly.
- The setting must have a working ventilation system to provide heating & cooling in bedrooms and main living areas.
- The setting must have electrical lighting in bedrooms and main living areas.
- The setting must have safe electrical wiring. The inspector will look at outlets to verify that plugs are not overloaded and will look at cords of major appliances to verify that they are plugged directly into a wall. Mid-sized appliances (TV's, stereos, computers, etc.) may be plugged into a power strip/surge protector. Extension cords should not be used to permanently connect an appliance to an outlet.
- The setting must have an operable telephone. If you do not have a "land line" you must ensure an operable phone will be available in the setting when individuals receiving care are present.
- The setting must have safe and functioning appliances for refrigerating and cooking food if meal service is part of the care provided. The refrigerator must maintain a temperature of less than 45°F.
- A carbon monoxide detector-alarm must be installed on each level of the setting that has a fireplace, appliance, or heating device using combustible fuel, such as gas, oil, wood or charcoal. **NEW!**
- The setting must have a system to obtain water that is safe for consumption. If you draw your water from a well or other private source, the inspector will look for evidence that a state or local health authority has approved the water for consumption (potable).
- The setting must have functioning plumbing. At least one functioning toilet and wash basin must be available for every 10 individuals living in or receiving care in the setting.
- Showers and tubs in the setting must have a slip resistant surface. This may be in the form of a rubber mat, a rough or corrugated surface, slip resistant appliques, etc.
- The hot water temperature in areas used for bathing must not exceed 120°F.
- Prescription **and** over-the-counter medications must be maintained in locked storage. Group home settings must maintain medications under a double locking system.
- Alcoholic beverages **and** toxic household cleaning supplies must be **safeguarded**, as appropriate. ("Safeguarded" means taking measures to prevent access. Safeguarding measures range from placing the items under lock and key to placing the substances out of the reach of children.)
- Highly toxic substances must be maintained in locked storage. Highly toxic substances include bleach, ammonia, gasoline, pesticides, lighter fluid, spray paint, drain cleaner or other substances that can cause serious bodily harm or death if improperly used.)
- Firearms and ammunition on the premises must be maintained separately and in locked storage (glass/breakable cabinets are not acceptable).
- Firearms must have trigger/cable locks or be rendered inoperable.
- Animals on the premises must not pose a hazard due to behaviors or disease; you must maintain evidence of current rabies vaccination for dogs.
- The setting and outside play areas must be free of insect and vermin infestation. If you are in the process of having pests professionally exterminated, please share this information with the inspector.
- Skirting is intact around the base of the setting, if the setting is a mobile home (on a platform).
- Ramps and stairs must be sturdy and have a slip resistant surface. Handrails must be secured.

Fire Safety

- Portable heaters must not be used in bedrooms or as the primary source of heat for the setting.
- If portable heaters are available in the setting, they must have an automatic shut-off switch and be U.L. approved. Kerosene heaters are prohibited.
- Flammables and combustibles must not be stored within 3 feet of heat sources (hot water heaters, furnaces, wood stoves, portable heaters, etc.)
- If the setting has a working fireplace, it must be protected by a fire screen.
- If the setting has a clothes dryer, it must be safely vented to the outside with an aluminum or metal vent hose.
- Each level of the setting must have at least one **2A 10BC (NEW!)** fire extinguisher (the rating may be higher, such as 3A 20BC, but it may not be lower, such as 1A 5BC).
- A working smoke detector must be installed in the primary living area. If residential or overnight care is provided, a working smoke detector must also be installed in each bedroom of the setting **(NEW!)**. If the setting has more than one level, a working smoke detector must be installed on each level.
- Exits from the setting must be clear of obstructions.
- Locks and security bars on windows and doors must have a quick release mechanism and must not require special knowledge, tools or strength to open. An allowance **may** be made for a double-keyed deadlock **if** the lock is located within 40 inches of breakable glass, **if** there is an alternate exit on the same level of the setting, and **if** the key is permanently maintained within six feet of the lock (all three **ifs** must be met for the allowance to be considered) **(NEW!)**.
- You must maintain an emergency evacuation plan for the setting. The evacuation plan should describe how each room can be exited in an emergency and it should designate a safe meeting place outside the setting. The plan should also identify the location of fire extinguishers and any evacuation equipment available in the home (e.g., rope ladders, if applicable). All persons living or working in the setting should be familiar with the emergency evacuation plan.
- Settings providing care to **six** or more individuals must conduct a fire drill at least once every three months. A report documenting each fire drill must be maintained in the setting for a minimum of 3 years. **NEW!**

Pools and Spas

If you provide care to a child under the age of 6 **OR**

If you provide care to an individual with developmental disabilities **AND**

If you have a swimming pool, spa or other body of water on the premises that is more than 18 inches in depth and can be used for swimming, recreational, or decorative purposes, it must be enclosed with a barrier that meets the following requirements:

- It must be fenced separate from the setting with a sturdy enclosure that is at least 5 feet high with openings measuring less than 4 inches.
- If the fence is chain link, the mesh must be no greater than 1 ¾ inches measured horizontally.
- If the fence is not permanent, it must require tools to dismantle the fence.
- The exterior of the fence must be free of hand/footholds to prevent access by climbing the enclosure.
- The gate for the enclosure must open outward and must be self-closing and self-latching.
- The gate latch must be at least 54 inches above the ground and must be secured with a key or combination lock whenever the pool, spa or body of water is not in use.
- Windows for bedrooms designated for individuals who are receiving care must not open into the pool enclosure. Other windows in the setting that open into the pool/spa area must be permanently secured to open no more than 4 inches and must not be designated as an emergency exit route for the setting.

While locking covers for pools and spas provide an additional level of safety, they may not be used in lieu of a fence.

- Pools and spas are relatively clean (the water must not be stagnant and must be clear enough to see through the water to the bottom of the pool or spa.)
- All pools 4 feet and deeper must have a shepherds crook **and** a ring buoy. The ring buoy should be attached to a sturdy rope that measures at least half the distance across the pool plus 10 feet.

(Swimming pools located in trailer parks, apartment complexes, and shared zones within a community are held to similar requirements, however, the regulatory authority is the county office of health.)