

Michelle G. Fry, J.D., Ph.D.
State Director
Constance Holloway
General Counsel
Tracey Hunt
Chief Financial Officer
Janet Priest
Interim Associate State Director
Operations
Lori Manos
Associate State Director
Policy



3440 Harden Street Extension
Columbia, South Carolina 29203
803/898-9600
Toll Free: 888/DSN-INFO
Home Page: www.ddsn.sc.gov

COMMISSION
Stephanie M. Rawlinson
Chairman
Barry D. Malphrus
Vice Chairman
Robin B. Blackwood
Secretary
Gary Kocher, M.D.
Eddie L. Miller
David L. Thomas
Michelle Woodhead

MEMORANDUM

TO: Executive Directors, DSN County Boards
CEOs, Contracted Service Providers

FROM: Constance Holloway *cmh*
General Counsel

RE: State Fire Marshal Inspections including Health and Sanitation Components

DATE: March 29, 2022

The South Carolina Department of Disabilities & Special Needs (DDSN) contracts with the State Fire Marshal's Office (OSFM), a division of SC Labor, Licensing, & Regulation, for Fire/Safety Inspections of CTH Is, CTH II, SLP IIs, and Day Programs. In 2019, the OSFM also began completing Health and Sanitation inspections for CTH Is and CTH IIs supporting persons under the age of 21. This change was beneficial to providers, as both inspections could be accomplished in a single visit and no additional fees were required.

As we move forward, the OSFM is further streamlining their efforts and will include the Health and Sanitation inspection as a part of all regularly scheduled CTH I and CTH II Fire/Safety inspections. This will facilitate a more efficient admission for persons under age 21. The Health and Sanitation Inspection includes basic operating expectations, so there is no negative impact to providers, other than the purchase of a refrigerator thermometer, if the current unit does not include a digital temperature display.

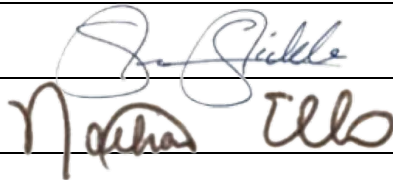
The attached informational bulletin includes procedures established by the OSFM for inspection. This will also serve as a general reminder of the individual components reviewed during any fire/safety inspection. Health and Sanitation regulations begin on page 6 of the attachment.

If you have any questions, please email license@ddsn.sc.gov.

Thank you for your help compiling this information.



**OSFM
INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN**

NUMBER:	18-2001	
EFFECTIVE DATE:	April 2, 2018	Revision March 1, 2022
FROM:	Shawn Stickle, Chief Deputy State Fire Marshal	
APPROVED:	Nathan Ellis, Assistant State Fire Marshal	
SECTION:	Code Enforcement	
SUBJECT:	Fire Inspection Requirements for DSS Foster Homes and DDSN CTHI's – Health Inspections for DSS Foster Homes, DDSN CTHI's, and DDSN CTH II's	

I. Objectives:

- A. To provide Deputy State Fire Marshals with guidance and clarification on South Carolina Code of Regulations - R.71-8301.3, R.144-550, and R.144-592 for consistent application statewide.
- B. To provide DSS Caseworkers, Child Placement Agencies, Foster Parents, and DDSN CTHI providers with fire inspection requirements prior to requesting the inspection in the State Fire Informational Management System (IMS).
- C. To provide DSS Caseworkers, Child Placement Agencies, Foster Parents, DDSN CTHI, and DDSN CTHII providers with health inspection requirements prior to requesting the inspection in the State Fire IMS.

II. Procedures

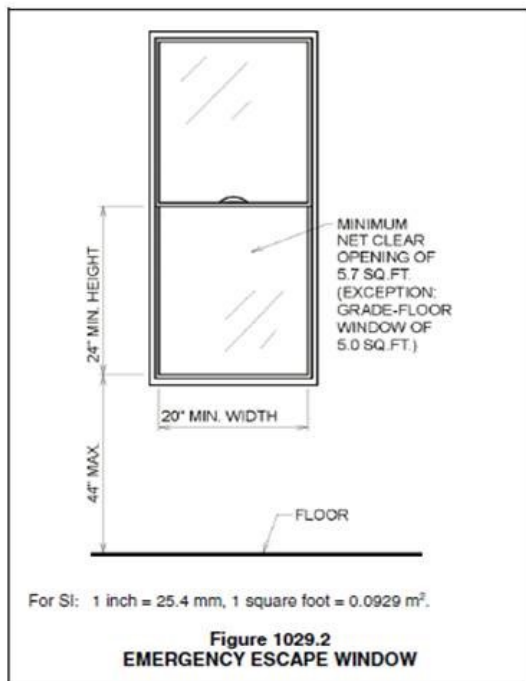
- A. Inspection request periods will run from the 16th of each month to C.O.B. the 15th of the following month. Inspections will be scheduled for the period within 5 business days of the inspection request period end. Providers will submit requests for annual and re-inspections into the State Fire IMS 90 days prior to license expiration. Requests for initial inspection of homes shall be submitted for the following inspection period.
- B. Only approved requesting agencies may request and/or cancel inspections. Inspections will not be scheduled without a proper request in the IMS. No Show/Cancellations for Initial Homes shall be requested as Initial Homes until an in person inspection occurs,
- C. Requesting Agencies shall list the home owner/operator as the owner on the individual tab of the IMS, with correct contact information (including email) to guarantee delivery of this bulletin of requirements prior to the fire inspection.
- D. Reports will no longer contain health inspection “collected data” and will only reflect deficiencies found. Both Fire and Health deficiencies will be cited as applicable, or the report will notate “No fire inspection deficiencies noted at the time of inspection” and “No health inspection deficiencies noted at the time of inspection” as a reference.

III. Contents

A. Fire Safety

1. Approved address numbers shall be placed in a position that is plainly legible and visible from the street.
 - a. Address number shall be a minimum of 4 inches high with a minimum stroke width of 0.5 inch and shall contrast with their background.
2. Foster Home shall be designed and constructed with the intent to be used as a dwelling.
3. One (1) portable fire extinguisher with a minimum classification of 2A:10BC shall be readily accessible and installed near cooking areas on your way to an exit outside.
 - a. Fire extinguishers shall be visually inspected monthly to ensure the needle is in the green.
 - b. Annual maintenance is not required for foster homes, however, extinguishers shall be replaced or serviced by a fire equipment dealer every 6 years from the manufacture date.
4. All egress doors and pathways shall not be obstructed, diminished, reduced, or require special knowledge, effort or a key to exit. No more than three actions, including opening the door, are permitted. (e.g. **1.** Unlock deadbolt. **2.** Unlock door knob. **3.** Turn door knob and open the door.)
 - a. Dual Cylinder locks are not permitted (lock requires a key to lock and unlock on the inside).
 - b. Doors are permitted to be equipped with a night latch, dead bolt or security chain, provided such devices are openable from the inside without the use of a key or tool, however, shall be installed no higher than 48” inches and it requires no more than three total actions.
5. Each sleeping room shall have an operable door that closes and latches to provide compartmentation that protects occupants in case of a fire event. A residential automatic fire sprinkler system will be considered an alternate method to compartmentation requirements.
 - a. Doors shall be positive latching (self-latch when pushed closed and require an action to unlatch/open) that resist not less than 5 pounds of force. Roller latches are prohibited.
 - b. Bedroom walls shall terminate at the ceiling, without unprotected openings, or lofts.
 - c. Barn Doors are permitted, however:
 - i. The barn door edges shall overlap the opening on the sides, top, and bottom if applicable.
 - ii. If provided with a latch, the latching mechanism shall be hardware that is manufactured for the purpose of latching sliding barn doors in place. Homemade solutions for latches, such as hook and eye or staple hasp latches, are not permitted.
6. All sleeping rooms below the fourth story shall have operable emergency escape and rescue openings that open from the inside. Emergency and escape rescue openings shall meet the dimensions illustrated below and have a net clear opening of not less than 5.7 square feet. Exception: Grade floor is permitted to be 5.0 square feet. Foster homes that do not comply with

minimum dimensions* of emergency escape and rescue opening shall have either smoke alarms interconnected in such a manner that the activation of one alarm will activate all of the alarms in the dwelling unit, or a have a residential automatic fire sprinkler system installed. Regardless, at the Deputy’s discretion, openings are still be required to allow an average size adult to escape and sill height shall not be higher than 44 inches from the floor.



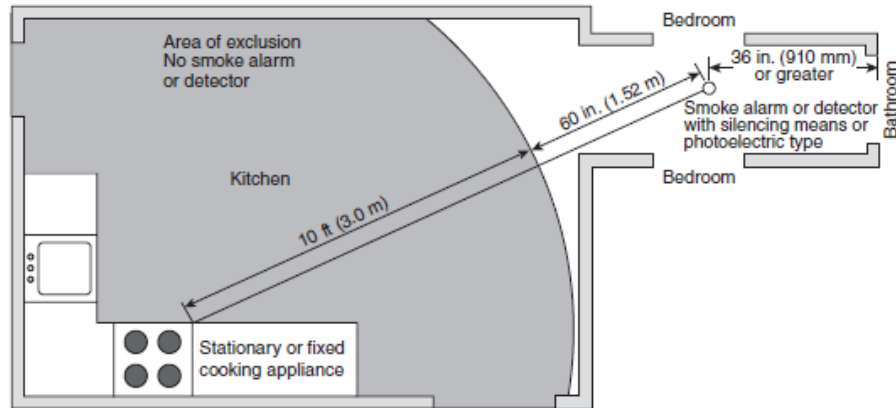
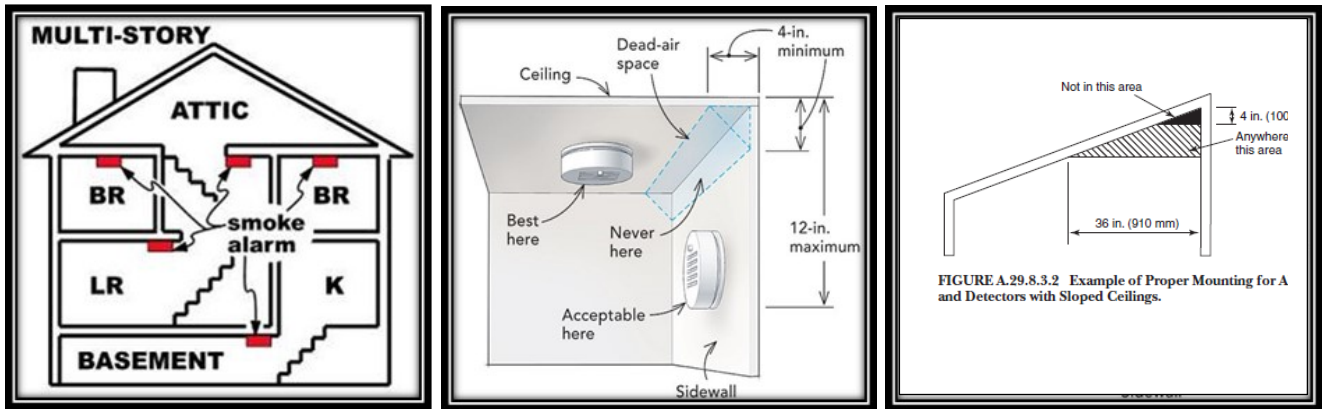
Equation: (Length x Width) ÷ 144

Example: (20" x 24") = 480 ÷ 144
= 3.33 Square feet

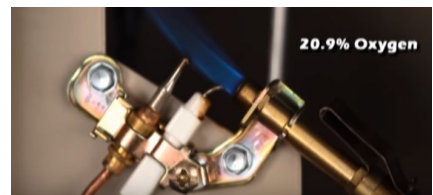
Note: The example shown does NOT meet the minimum area required, though it does meet the minimum dimensions. Thus, interconnected smoke alarms or a residential automatic fire sprinkler system are required.

- a. **Below Grade:** Where the sill height is below grade, it shall be provided with a window well with the horizontal area of the window well shall be not less than 9 square feet with a horizontal projection and width of not less than 36 inches. The area of the window well shall allow the emergency escape and rescue opening to be fully opened. The ladder or steps required shall be permitted to encroach not more than 6 inches into the required dimensions of the window well. Nothing shall obstruct these openings.
7. Listed smoke alarms shall be installed on the ceiling or wall outside of each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of bedrooms (within 21 feet per NFPA 72), in each room used for sleeping purposes, and on each habitable story within a dwelling (including basements).
- a. Smoke alarms expire based on the manufacture’s guidelines or 10 years from the date of manufacture, whichever is less, and shall be installed per illustrations below.
 - b. Hardwired and/or interconnected alarms are required to be maintained if installed per illustrations below.
 - c. Homes without hardwired interconnected alarms shall be provided with a sealed 10-year life battery if emergency escape and rescue openings meet minimum size and dimensions.
 - i. If emergency escape and rescue openings do not meet minimum size requirements, listed wireless interconnected smoke alarms shall be installed.
 - ii. If the home is provided with hardwired in the common areas and installed properly, a wireless “bridge” unit shall be installed to communicate with wireless alarms in the bedrooms.

- d. Fire Alarm Systems need to comply with regulations and NFPA 72, and may only be approved by a supervisor.



8. An approved carbon monoxide alarm shall be installed and maintained* outside of **each** separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms** if home has:
- a. Fuel fired appliances are installed.
 - b. Attached garages (3 sides enclosed).
 - c. Fireplaces.
 - d. Combination smoke/carbon monoxide alarms are permissible.
- * Carbon monoxide alarms expire based on the manufacture’s guidelines.
**Bedrooms with fuel fired appliances or fireplaces shall also have carbon monoxide alarms.
9. All heating devices shall be installed per manufacturer’s guidelines.
- a. Unvented gas heaters shall have an operating oxygen depletion device that shuts off at 18% oxygen (picture below), an operating safety shutoff device, and shall be located or guarded to prevent burn injuries.



- b. Portable, unvented heaters are not permitted; e.g. Kerosene heaters.
- c. Fireplaces shall be equipped with fire screens, partitions, or other means to protect clients from burns.
- d. Listed space heaters shall have a tip over switch, have a three foot clearance on all sides and be directly plugged into an outlet.

10. The dwelling shall be free of dangers that constitute an obvious fire hazard such as the following:

- a. Hoarding conditions (contact supervisor).
- b. Electrical Hazards, including using extension cords as permanent wiring.
- c. Improperly installed/maintained dryer vent.
- d. Storage of flammable liquids or gases.
- e. Items considered a fire hazard by the Deputy’s judgement (contact supervisor)

11. A fire escape plan describing what actions are to be taken by the family in the event of a fire must be developed and posted in one location.

- a. Recommended example found on our website, not required:

[Foster Home Fire Drill Planner](#)

Draw the layout of your home as best you can. Include:

- Doorways
- Windows
- Each room
- Smoke alarm locations (label "SA") *Date installed _____
- Carbon monoxide alarm location(s) (label "CO") *Date installed _____
- Fire extinguisher location(s) (label "FE") *Date Serviced _____

Visit each room in your home and:

- Find two ways out
- Draw arrows on your "Fire Drill Planner" showing two ways out

Draw a separate floor plan for:

- Basements, 2nd or 3rd floors, Finished room over garage (FROG)

Mark your Fire Drill Planner with your safe meeting place:

- Pick a solid object that isn't easily moved, such as a tree
- Make sure the object is far enough from your home so it's safe to stand there

- b. A fire escape drill shall be conducted every three (3) months and records of the drills shall be maintained on the premises for three (3) years.
 - i. The records shall give the date, time, and weather conditions during the drill, number evacuated, description, and evaluation of the fire drill. Fire drills shall include complete evacuation of all persons from the building.
 - ii. A fire escape drill shall be conducted within twenty-four (24) hours of the arrival of each new foster child.

B. Health Safety – All Initial Foster/Kinship Homes, Annual CTH I and CTH II Inspections

1. *Health Hazards – South Carolina Code of Regulations – Foster Homes R.114-550
 - CTH II’s - R.114-592
 - b. Water temperature below 120 degrees Fahrenheit - R.114-550.N.2.c
 - CTH II Water temperature between 100 to 120 degrees Fahrenheit - R.114-592.A.5.f
 - c. Excessive garbage and uncleanliness. (contact supervisor) - R.114-550.L.2
 - CTH II - R.114-592.C.1.a
 - d. Insect/rodent Infestations. - R.114-550.L.3.b
 - CTH II – R.114-592.B.5.b
 - e. *Prevent the child’s access, as appropriate for his or her age and development, to all medications, poisonous materials, cleaning supplies, other hazardous materials, and alcoholic beverages - R.114.550.N.5.a
 - Poisonous materials, cleaning supplies and Hazardous materials shall not be stored in a manner that spills or leaks may come in contact with consumables or be mistaken as a consumable. - R.114-550. N.5.a
 - CTHII – R.114-592.B.4.a
 - f. Be free from objects, materials, and conditions that constitute a danger to health or life safety by the Deputy’s judgement. (contact supervisor) - R.114-550.L.3.a
 - CTH II - R.114-592.A.4.b
2. Public Water/Waste or Well Water Sample R.114-550.N.2 (OSFM not citing pending tests).
 - a. Shall be negative for Coliform and E.coli.
 - b. Positive samples will be handled by the Senior Deputy – Notification will be made to the caseworker and homeowner for disinfection procedures in accordance with SCDHEC.
 - DDSN providers perform annual tests. State Fire does not collect DDSN Well samples for testing.
3. Septic hazards that constitute a danger to health - R.114-550.L.3.a
 - CTH II - R.114-592.A.5.d
4. Pet Inoculations annual per SC Code of Laws §47-5-60. - R.114-550.N.3.b
 - a. Pet Inoculations are required for Cats, Dogs, and Ferrets
 - CTH II - R.114-592.B.3.a
5. CTH II Fridge Temperatures maintained at or below 41 degrees Fahrenheit (5 degrees Celsius) per DDSN. Items in Freezer shall be maintained frozen, - R.61-25 3-501.12 (A).
 - a. Refrigerators shall be equipped with ambient air temperature measuring devices. - R.61-25 4-204.112 (A) In a mechanically refrigerated or hot food storage unit, the sensor of a temperature measuring device shall be located to measure the air temperature in the warmest part of a mechanically refrigerated unit and in the coolest part of a hot food storage unit.

***Note: State Fire does not inspect Swimming pools, medications, weapons, alcoholic beverages, or any other item covered in R.114-550 or R.114-592 not included above.**

IV. Interpretation Contact

- A. Senior Deputy State Fire Marshal
- B. Chief Deputy State Fire Marshal
- C. Assistant State Fire Marshal