



Office of  
Mental Health

# Fire Safety Reference Guide for Supervised Community Residences

## Booklet 5: *Fire Safety Equipment*





# **FIRE SAFETY REFERENCE GUIDE FOR SUPERVISED COMMUNITY RESIDENCES**

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## **Booklet 5: *Fire Safety Equipment***

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**This is Booklet 5 in a series of 5 booklets.**

### ***Other booklets include:***

**Booklet 1:** *Self-Preservation*

**Booklet 2:** *Evacuation Planning*

**Booklet 3:** *Fire Drills*

**Booklet 4:** *Fire Prevention*

*Developed by the NYS Office of Mental Health  
Available online at [www.omh.ny.gov](http://www.omh.ny.gov)*

**Revised October 2015**

**Please note that this booklet is  
a supplement to Basic Fire Safety Training.**

***Staff are expected to participate in fire safety training before they use this booklet.*** This booklet is designed to reinforce materials presented during training and to provide samples/templates of forms associated with the topics discussed. It is recommended that fire safety training be provided at least annually.

The Office of Mental Health (OMH) in conjunction with the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) and the Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC) developed an on-line training program that can be used by agencies as a core for Basic Fire Safety Training. This training program for staff of supervised community residences is located at [OMH.NY.GOV](http://OMH.NY.GOV).

# BOOKLET 5:

## *Fire Safety Equipment*



### What items are considered safety equipment?

- Fire extinguishers
- Fire alarm systems
- Smoke detectors
- Carbon monoxide detectors
- Heat detectors
- Emergency exit lighting
- Sprinkler Systems
- Pull boxes
- Auxiliary equipment including strobe lights, specialized alarms, etc.
- Fire escapes including access windows, security gates, etc.
- Doors including locking mechanisms, latches, panic bars, etc.

**Note:** The type and kind of safety equipment varies from home to home.



## **How can you tell what safety equipment is in a community residence?**

Identification of the home's fire safety equipment should be included in the house specific fire evacuation plan manual.

## **What are the rules and time frames regarding the inspection and testing of safety equipment?**

OMH regulations and The National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) require regular testing and inspection of fire safety equipment. Unless more frequent testing and inspection of safety equipment is required by regulation or code, the general rule is to follow the manufacturer's testing and inspection schedule.

## **What is the difference between functional testing and visual inspection?**

Functional testing is when the system or device is activated to determine if it is working properly. Holding a smoke stick under a smoke detector to set it off or pushing the test button on emergency lights are examples of functional testing.

Visual inspection is when a person looks at indicators and the equipment itself to determine if the system is in operating mode. Checking the pressure gauge on a fire extinguisher, ensuring there is a battery in a smoke detector, verifying lights are lighted on the fire panel and ensuring pull boxes have not been tampered with are examples of visual inspection.

## **What are the rules and time frames for inspecting and testing safety equipment?**

The attached testing and inspection schedule (Attachment 2) should meet most requirements. Staff must document their inspection and testing of safety equipment on forms that are customized for each residence (Attachment 3). Since safety equipment varies between residences, Attachment 3 should only be used as an example.

## **What should be done if a problem is identified during the inspection and testing?**

A supervisor should be notified immediately of any problem. Until the safety equipment is repaired or replaced, all house staff and residents should be made aware of the problem and be instructed on what to do until the problem is corrected. For example: It was noted that the fire alarm panel was not functioning properly. Staff and residents should be informed that the alarm may not go off in an actual emergency and staff should begin regularly scheduled house rounds, as directed by the supervisor, on all floors until the problem is resolved.

### Definitions

**Functional Testing:** Verify that the system is in working order by simulating a fire condition or activating a test button.

**Visual Inspection:** Confirms that system is activated and operating properly by visually checking system, such as, panel lights and other trouble lights or gauges. Usually does not require activation of system.

**Qualified fire alarm company:** A company certified by the State of New York to perform fire alarm system testing.

### Fire Alarm System

#### Non-interconnected Single Detector (battery, plug-in):

**Weekly:** functional test by pushing test button.

**Every Six Months:** change battery.

#### Non-interconnected Single Detector (hard-wired):

**Weekly:** visually inspect to verify the light flashes at regular intervals.

**Monthly:** activate test button to verify smoke detector is functional.

#### Interconnected smoke detectors with no fire panel (hard-wired; if one goes off, all go off):

**Weekly:** visually inspect to verify that light on each detector flashes at regular intervals.

**Monthly:** test system by setting off one smoke detector and verify all detectors activate.

If applicable, visually inspect pull boxes to ensure they have not been tampered with.

**Every Six Months:** change batteries on smoke detectors with battery backup.

**Annually:** Have system, including attic heat detectors, tested and serviced by a qualified individual.

#### Interconnected alarm with in-house fire panel:

**Weekly:** visually inspect fire panel to ensure no system warning lights (usually red) are activated. Visually inspect to verify that all required panel lights (usually green) are lighted.

**Monthly:** visually inspect fire panel and visually inspect all detectors. Check to see if detectors are secure and where applicable, verify detectors are flashing at regular intervals. If applicable, visually inspect pull boxes to ensure they have not been tampered with.

**Annually:** complete functional test of the alarm system, including attic heat detectors, conducted by a certified testing company using qualified state licensed inspectors. A copy of this test should be kept at the residence.

### Carbon Monoxide (CO) Detectors

#### Non-interconnected Single Detector (battery, plug-in):

**Weekly:** functional test by pushing test button.

**Every Six Months:** change battery.

#### Non-interconnected Single Detector (hard-wired):

**Weekly:** visually inspect to verify the light flashes at regular intervals.

**Monthly:** activate test button to verify CO detector is functional.

#### Interconnected CO detector with in-house fire panel:

**Weekly:** visually inspect fire panel to ensure no system warning lights (usually red) are activated. Visually inspect to verify that all required panel lights (usually green) are lighted.

## ATTACHMENT #1: Monitoring and Testing Requirements

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**Monthly:** visually inspect fire panel and visually inspect all detectors. Ensure that detectors are secure and, where applicable, verify detectors are blinking at regular intervals. If applicable, visually inspect pull boxes to ensure they have not been tampered with.

### Emergency Lights

**Monthly:** Functional test conducted by activating test button. Visual inspection, if applicable, to verify the back-up battery is properly charged.

**Annually:** Functional test and full test of battery, verification of charge voltage, alignment of light heads, etc. Testing of emergency lighting should be completed as part of the annual test conducted by a qualified testing company.

### Portable Fire Extinguishers

**Monthly:** visually inspect to verify pressure is within required range, tag is current and ensure fire extinguisher is properly mounted and secured to wall with no evidence of tampering.

**Annually:** inspected by professional company as part of annual fire alarm system check.

**Periodically:** replace portable fire extinguishers according to manufacturer recommendations. Manufacturers generally stamp the year of manufacture on the bottom of the extinguisher. Most manufacturers recommend replacement of portable fire extinguishers every 12 years.

### Sprinkler System

**Monthly (New York City Only):** Visual inspection to see that all parts of the system are in working order. In NYC, sprinkler system inspections can be done by licensed fire suppression contractor, licensed master plumber or an individual with F-95 Certificate of Fitness.

**Quarterly (Outside of NYC):** Visual inspection of all sprinkler devices connected to alarm, verify water flow switches and valve tamper switches are functioning, verify air pressure alarms are operational, inspect fire pump monitor points, etc. This series of tests and inspections should be completed by an experienced sprinkler testing company or individual.

**Annually (All of NY State):** full test and inspection of the sprinkler system should be completed by a company experienced in testing sprinkler systems. NYC requires at minimum an F-95 Certificate of Fitness.

### Out-swinging Exit Doors

**Annually (All of NY State):** full inspection of the out-swinging exit doors must be completed by a certified Fire Door Assembly Inspector

### Auxiliary equipment

Should be tested and inspected as indicated by manufacturer.

KBL, MJB, MAS – Inspection Requirements 9/2014

**ATTACHMENT #2: Template- Weekly Safety Equipment Inspection Form**

**Instructions:**

Staff performing the inspection should initial the form before starting weekly inspection. If the equipment is okay mark box with **OK**. If not okay, mark box with **NO** and indicate the problem in the "Problem noted" column.

Month of _____ (month, year) House Name: _____						
Date	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Problem Noted:
Staff Initials						
Fire Panel:						
Green lights on panel are lit						
Smoke Detectors: check to see if secure to ceiling and watch to see if red light flashes every 30 sec.						
Hallway						
Dining room						
1st Bedroom						
2nd Bedroom						
3rd Bedroom						
Basement Stairs						
Carbon Monoxide Detectors: Check to see if secure to ceiling and push button to test alarm.						
Hallway						
Basement						
Manual pull boxes: visually inspect to make sure box has not been tampered with.						
Front door						
Back door						
Fire extinguishers: confirm extinguisher is mounted and visually inspect gauge to verify extinguisher is fully charged.						
Kitchen						
Hallway						
Basement						
Emergency lighting: push test button to see if unit lights.						
Hallway						
Living room						
Exit signs: look to see if exit sign is lighted.						
Front door						
Back door						
Comments:						

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**ATTACHMENT #3: Example of Weekly Safety Equipment Inspection Form**

The following example is for a home that has the following equipment:  
 1 fire alarm box operating, 6 smoke detectors (hard wired/interconnected), 2 manual pull boxes (interconnected with fire alarm), 2 carbon monoxide (CO) detectors (battery operated), 2 emergency lights (hard wired/ battery backup), 2 lighted exit signs (hard wire/battery backup) and fire extinguishers (A-B-C 10 lb.).

**Instructions:**

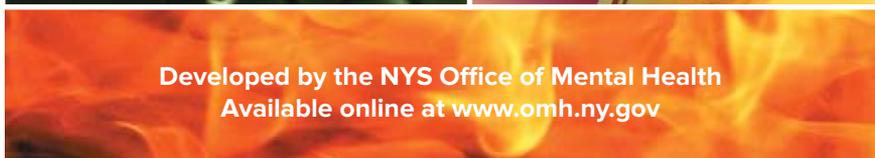
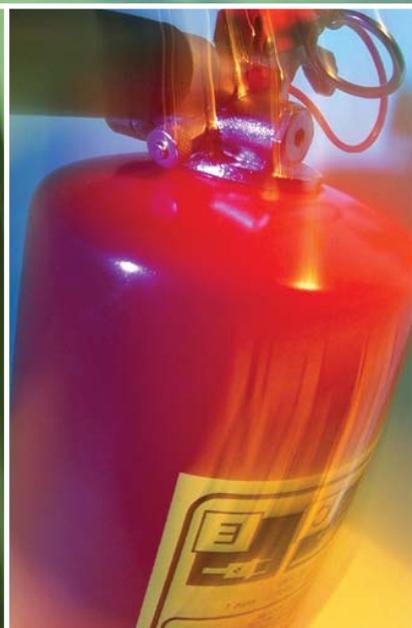
Staff performing the inspection should initial the form before starting weekly inspection. If the equipment is okay mark box with **OK**. If not okay, mark box with **NO** and indicate the problem in the "Problem Noted" column.

Month of January 2011 - Weekly Equipment Checklist						
House Name: Mountain House						
Date	1/1/11	1/7/11	1/14/11	1/21/11	1/28/11	Problem Noted
Staff initials	JK	DK	JK	DK	JK	
<b>Fire Panel:</b>						
Green lights on panel are lighted	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK	
<b>Smoke Detectors:</b> check to see if secure to ceiling and watch detector to see if red light flashes every 30 sec.						
Hallway	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK	1/1 3rd bedroom light did not blink - replaced detector 1/2 2nd bedroom detector not secure to ceiling - secured to ceiling
Dining room	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK	
1 <sup>st</sup> Bedroom	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Bedroom	OK	OK	OK	OK	NO	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Bedroom	NO	OK	OK	OK	OK	
Basement Stairs	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK	
<b>Carbon Monoxide Detectors:</b> check to see if secure to ceiling and push button to test alarm						
Hallway	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK	1/1 Basement - battery dead - replaced battery 1/4 Basement - replaced unit
Basement	NO	OK	NO	OK	OK	
<b>Manual pull boxes:</b> visually inspect to make sure box has not been tampered with						
Front door	OK	NO	OK	NO	OK	1/7 pull box loose 1/21 pull box loose - repair order written
Back door	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK	
<b>Fire extinguishers:</b> confirm extinguisher is mounted and visually inspect gauge to verify extinguisher is fully charged						
Kitchen	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK	1/9 pressure slightly down 1/4 pressure down - replaced
Hallway	OK	NO	NO	OK	OK	
Basement	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK	
<b>Emergency lighting:</b> push test button to see if unit lights						
Hallway	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK	1/4 sign not lighted - replaced bulb
Living room	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK	
Back door	OK	OK	NO	OK	OK	
<b>Exit signs:</b> look to see if exit sign is lighted						
Front door	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK	1/4 sign not lighted - replaced bulb
Back door	OK	OK	NO	OK	OK	
<b>Comments:</b> Not sure why pull box was not secured after it was first noted. - House manager will review all work orders						
Reviewed by: <u>Patti Lee</u> Date <u>2/5/11</u>						

**Complete copies of the  
Weekly Safety Equipment Inspection Form  
is located at [www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/firesafety/](http://www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/firesafety/).**



**Additional copies of this brochure are located at  
[www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/firesafety/](http://www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/firesafety/).**



Developed by the NYS Office of Mental Health  
Available online at [www.omh.ny.gov](http://www.omh.ny.gov)