

# Kaufman County Fire Marshal's Office

SERVING THE UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF KAUFMAN COUNTY, TEXAS  
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## FIRE INSPECTION GUIDELINES FOR FOSTER HOME PARENTS

*For Foster Homes Existing Prior To January 1, 2007*

In accordance with Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) guidelines, foster homes licensed for 1 thru 6 children must have an initial fire inspection upon verification and a reinspection every two years thereafter. In accordance with Local Government Code, Chapter 352.016, all fire and life safety inspections in unincorporated Kaufman County must be performed by the county fire marshal, or approved designee. The Fire & Life Safety Inspection Standard is “NFPA 101<sup>®</sup>, Life Safety Code, 2006 Edition”. All foster homes should be in compliance with the American Disabilities Act (ADA) where applicable.

TDFPS and KCFMO have worked together to develop this fire inspection checklist for all foster homes located outside city limits in Kaufman County. Most of the requirements on the checklist are easy to understand, but a few may need some explanation.

These guidelines are designed to help you understand and prepare for a fire inspection of your existing residential foster home if you are licensed for 1 thru 6 children.

1. No more than six children living in the home. If you are licensed for more than 6 children, you need to use the form for *Foster Group Homes*.
2. Your home is a 1- or 2-family dwelling. If you live in a multi-family dwelling (apartment), the building must also comply with applicable chapters of NFPA 101. Please contact KCFMO to discuss the additional inspection requirements.
3. Your address must be clearly visible from the roadway and a minimum height of 4 inches, stroke width of ½ inch and of a contrasting color.
4. You must show documentation that you have an evacuation plan (drawing showing evacuation routes) and procedures for meeting potential disasters and emergencies, such as fire and severe weather. These drills must be practiced at least twelve times each year. We recommend a drill each month. At a minimum, the fire drill records must include:
  - a. The date and time of day;
  - b. The time taken to reach a point of safety. The goal is to achieve prompt evacuation capability of 3 minutes or less.
5. No high-hazard contents – flammable liquids, explosives, or similar materials -- may be stored or used in the residence building. No more than 10 gallons of flammable liquid (e.g. gasoline) may be on the property. Flammable liquids must be stored in approved containers with tight-fitting lids; kept away from children, and away from heat sources (including hot water heater). We recommend that flammable liquids be stored away from the main building and kept secure under lock and key.
6. Two primary exits, remotely located from each other. (Dwellings > 2000 sq ft. per story, or with travel distances > 75 ft.)
7. Every sleeping room, dining area, and living area must have a secondary way to escape, other than the “front” or “back” door of the home. This escape route **must not** require any tools, keys, or special knowledge or effort. The secondary escape may be:
  - a. A door leading directly to the outside at street or ground level;
  - b. An approved outside window that has a minimum opening of 5.7 sq. ft; and is at least 20 inches wide, 24 inches high, and no higher than 44 in. above the floor; or
  - c. A non-locking door into an adjoining room that has an exit described above.

### **8. CPS does not allow security or “burglar” bars in foster homes.**

If the home has these installed, they must be removed.

9. All doors must be at least 28 inches wide and 80 inches high. Bathroom doors may be less than 24 in. wide, and must be able to be opened from the outside when locked. Children must be able to open closet doors from the inside. Doors can be either “sliding” or “swinging” type,

with approved door locks -- no double-keyed dead bolts. There must be an approved latch on attic access doors and installed opposite of the hinges. A thumb latch is OK.

**10.** All bedrooms / living areas above the first floor must be accessible by an approved set of stairs. Living spaces for non-ambulatory occupants must be on the ground floor only.

**11.** All hallways must be at least 36 inches wide.

**12.** Interior wall and ceiling finish can be Class A, B, or C. Most painted, or wallpapered, sheetrock walls meet this requirement. Some textiles, paneling, plastic trims, or multiple layers of wallpaper may not meet this requirement and must be removed.

**13.** There must be a working smoke detector installed in each sleeping room and in the hallway in the immediate vicinity of the sleeping rooms. The detectors may operate from battery or household current, with battery backup. If you live in a multi-story home, there must be smoke detectors on every floor, including basements. All alarms must comply with American Disabilities Act (ADA), as required.

**14.** Stoves, ovens, heaters, and fireplaces equipped with metal tubing and connectors, and properly vented. Stovetops may be vented to an open space; all other must be vented to the outside. A gas stove or oven must have an approved gas cock valve in the supply line. Heaters and fireplaces equipped with screens to prevent contact with open flames or hot surfaces. Freestanding stoves must be secured in a manner to prevent tipping over if pulled or climbed upon.

**15.** Your water heater must be properly vented, and equipped with an approved vented safety pressure relief valve, and drain pipe. If it is a gas water heater, it must be equipped with 100% gas cut-off valve. The gas water heater if located in the garage shall be mounted 18 inches from the floor. If the gas water heater is located inside the home, the gas water heater is not required to be mounted 18 inches from the floor although it is recommended that all gas water heaters be mounted 18 inches from the floor. **DO NOT** store any flammable liquids or combustibles near the water heater.

**16.** All gas piping must be inspected by a Texas licensed plumbing contractor every two years.

**17.** Combustibles must be stored away from stoves, heaters, or fireplaces. You must use good housekeeping habits, with no accumulated trash or combustible materials.

**18.** All heating and air-conditioning units, ventilating ductwork and related equipment must be inspected by a Texas licensed air-conditioning contractor the first year, with optional inspections thereafter. You must be able to provide a copy of documentation that these systems have been installed and maintained in accordance with *NFPA 90A, Standard for the Installation of Air Conditioning and Ventilating Systems*, or *NFPA 90B, Standard for the Installation of Warm Air Heating and Air Conditioning Systems*, as applicable. Check with your local HVAC contractor to obtain the required documentation. It must include the contractor's name, address, telephone number, and their state certification and license numbers.

**19.** You must have at least one UL (Underwriter's Laboratory) listed Class ABC fire extinguisher for every 2000 square feet of living area. The extinguisher requirements are:

- a. Minimum size is 1A-10BC or 2-½ lb, with a working pressure gauge
- b. Must have been purchased NEW within the past 12 months, OR has been inspected and tagged by a Texas licensed fire extinguisher contractor within the past 12 months;
- c. Located in a conspicuous place in the kitchen near the exit door, but not too close to the stove or oven; and
- d. At least one on every floor, located in a conspicuous place.

**20.** Matches and lighters must be kept out of the reach of children.

**21.** Electrical system and appliances must be in good condition, with child-proof covers on unused outlets. Extension cords should be used safely and not for permanent use.

**22.** There must be at least one operable flashlight on each story of the residence.

We hope these guidelines are helpful. If you have any questions about your fire inspection, please call our office at 469-376-4110, 469-376-4111, or 469-376-4112.