



A publication of Fairfax County, Virginia



CODE COMPLIANCE GUIDELINE **HOME CHILD CARE FACILITY**

FIRE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

**Office of the Fire Marshal
Fire Inspections Branch**

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This publication outlines the fire safety requirements for home child care facilities (as defined by Chapter 30 of the Fairfax County Code) located in Fairfax County and the towns of Clifton, Herndon, and Vienna. These fire safety requirements apply only to home child care facilities authorized by the Director of the Fairfax County Office for Children (OFC).

Questions regarding the content of this publication should be directed to the Fire Inspections Branch at 703-246-4849 during regular office hours, Monday thru Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

FIRE MARSHAL INSPECTION

In accordance with Section 30-3-2 (b) (ii) of the Fairfax County Code, the Office of the Fire Marshal is required to conduct fire safety inspections of both proposed and existing home child care facilities regulated by OFC, and advise the Director of OFC of any noncompliance with the fire safety requirements. Therefore, to assist home child care providers achieve compliance, the Fire Marshal recommends the use of this publication as a guide to determine if the home child care facility meets the minimum requirements for fire safety.

DOCUMENTATION & PLANNING

- Emergency Evacuation Plan.** The provider shall prepare an emergency evacuation plan, which shall include the following:
 - Occupant Notification. Written instructions explaining the preferred method to notify employees, children, and other occupants of an emergency situation.
 - Escape Plan. Diagram or drawing showing the emergency egress routes from each room where child care is permitted.
 - Accounting for Occupants. Written instructions explaining the procedures for accounting for employees, children, and other occupants.
 - 911 Instructions. Written instructions explaining the preferred and alternate plan to notify emergency response organizations (i.e., calling 911). Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (z)
- Emergency Evacuation Drills.** Fire evacuation drills shall be conducted monthly in all home child care facilities. Records shall be maintained on site and provided to the Fire Code Official upon request. Each record shall include the identity of the person conducting each drill; the date and time of each drill; the notification/initiating method used; the number of occupants evacuated; special conditions simulated; problems encountered; weather conditions when occupants were evacuated; and the time required to accomplish a complete evacuation. **Note:** A fire drill guideline and annual fire drill record form is issued to

- the provider during the fire marshal fire safety inspection. *Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (aa)*
3. **Building Address Numbers Posted.** Address numbers or building numbers shall be placed in a position that is plainly legible and visible from the street or road fronting the property. *Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (c)*
 4. **Telephone Required.** Telephone service shall be available, operable and accessible during the home child care facility's hours of operation. *Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (a)*
 5. **911 Stickers Posted on Telephones.** All landline telephones shall be labeled with 911 stickers approved by the Office of the Fire Code Official. *Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (b)*

EMERGENCY EXITS & STAIRS

6. **Emergency Exits Readily Available.** All egress pathway and exit doors shall be unlocked in the direction of egress and free from obstructions that would prevent their use, including debris, storage, and accumulations of snow and ice. *Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (g)*
7. **Two Means of Egress for Sleeping Areas.** Rooms used for sleeping must provide two means of exit, one that leads directly to the outside, as required by the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC). *Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (bb)*
8. **Closet and Bathroom Doors.** Closet and bathroom doors shall be unlocked in the direction of egress and designed to permit opening of the locked door from the outside with a readily accessible opening device. *Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (h)*
9. **Stairs, Handrails & Guard Rails.** All exit stairs, interior or exterior, shall be in good repair and shall be provided with handrails and guard rails as required by the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code. *Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (f)*

SMOKE ALARMS & CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

10. **Smoke Alarms Required.** An operable smoke alarm shall be provided outside of each sleeping area, with at least one such device on each floor. Each smoke alarm shall be tested at least once a month and records of testing provided to the Fire Code Official upon request. Smoke alarms may be of the fixed-wired or battery type. *Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (u)*
11. **Carbon Monoxide (CO) Detector Required.** An operable carbon monoxide alarm shall be installed in homes according to the manufacturer's specifications where appliances may produce carbon monoxide. Each carbon monoxide alarm shall be tested at least once a month and records of testing provided to the Fire Code Official upon request.
Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (v)

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

12. **Portable Fire Extinguisher Required.** Portable fire extinguishers having a minimum rating of 1A10BC shall be properly mounted and readily accessible (i) within 30 feet of cooking equipment; and (ii) in areas where flammable liquids are stored, used, or dispensed.
Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (w)
13. **Portable Fire Extinguisher Maintenance.** Portable fire extinguishers shall be selected, installed, and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications. All fire

extinguishers shall be replaced at least every six years. *Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (x)*

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

14. **Clear Space in Front of Electrical Panels.** A working space of not less than 30 inches in width, 36 inches in depth, and 78 inches in height shall be provided in front of the electrical service equipment. Where the electrical service equipment is wider than 30 inches, the working space shall not be less than the width of the equipment. No storage of any materials shall be located within the designated working space. *Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (k)*
15. **Extension Cords.** Extension cords, temporary wiring, and flexible cords shall not be substituted for permanent wiring. Extension cords and flexible cords shall not be affixed to structures, extended through walls, ceilings, or floors, or under doors or floor coverings, or be subject to environmental or physical damage. *Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (j)*
16. **Abatement of Electrical Hazards.** Electrical hazards identified by the Fire Code Official shall be abated in accordance with the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC). In nearly all cases, when electrical hazards are identified, only a qualified electrician, licensed by the Commonwealth of Virginia, can safely correct an electrical hazard. In many cases, the licensed electrician must obtain an electrical permit from the local Building Official.
Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (i)

STORAGE & WASTE ACCUMULATION

17. **Storage of Combustible Materials.** Storage of combustible materials in buildings shall be orderly. Storage shall be separated from heaters or heating devices by distance or shielding so that ignition cannot occur. *Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (s)*
18. **Storage of Toxic or Dangerous Materials.** Toxic or dangerous materials shall be stored in areas that are inaccessible to children and separate from food supplies and areas in which food is prepared. *Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6 (e)*
19. **Storage of Flammable/Combustible Liquids.** Storage of flammable or combustible liquids inside buildings in containers and portable tanks shall be in accordance with the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC) and the manufacturer's recommendations. Areas of flammable and combustible liquid storage shall be secured to prevent access during the home child care facility hours of operation. *Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (y)*
20. **Storage of Lawnmowers/Tools.** Areas of storage of machinery such as lawnmowers and power tools shall be inaccessible to the children in care. *Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (y) (ii)*
21. **Accumulation of Combustible Waste Material.** Combustible waste material creating a fire hazard shall not be allowed to accumulate in buildings, structures, or upon premises. Trash and other waste materials shall be removed as often as necessary to prevent excessive accumulations and shall be deposited in trash or waste disposal containers.
Fairfax County Code, Sections 30-3-6.1 (y) (i) and 30-6-6 (d)
22. **Accumulation of Grease.** Kitchen ranges, ovens, and exhaust hoods, grease removal devices, fans, ducts, and other appurtenances shall be free of excessive grease.
Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (e)
23. **Accumulation on Heating Equipment.** Combustible waste material, lint, and dust creating a fire hazard shall not be allowed to accumulate in or on dryers, heating appliances, and

furnaces. *Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (d)*

HEATING EQUIPMENT

24. **Maintenance of Heating Systems & Exhaust Vents.** Heating systems and associated ductwork shall be clean and in good working order. Adequate combustion air must be provided as required by the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC). Flues for the exhaust of carbon monoxide and other by-products of combustion shall be free of leaks and in good repair. *Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (t)*
25. **Equipment Clearance from Ignition Sources.** Furnaces and other heating appliances shall maintain clearance from ignition sources as specified by the equipment manufacturer, unless the provider can establish cause for an exception. *Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (r)*
26. **Portable Unvented Fuel-Fired Heaters.** The use of portable unvented fuel-fired heating equipment is prohibited except in single-family dwellings classified R-5 by the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC). Where allowed, such equipment must be listed and approved by a nationally recognized testing laboratory. *Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (l)*
- Prohibited Locations:* Portable unvented fuel-fired heating equipment shall not be located in, or obtain combustion air from, any of the following rooms or spaces: sleeping rooms, bathrooms, toilet rooms, storage closets. *Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code, Section 603.4.1*
27. **Heating Element Protection.** Where portable unvented fuel-fired heating equipment is allowed, the heating element or the combustion chamber shall be permanently guarded so as to prevent accidental contact by persons or combustible material. *Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (m)*

FIREPLACES & WOOD STOVES

28. **Fireplace Screens, Glass, or Doors.** Fireplace screens, glass, or doors shall be in good condition and designed to guard against accidental contact with the combustion chamber contents. The fireplace screen, glass, or doors shall be affixed to prevent accidental release of embers or products of combustion. *Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (n)*
29. **Fireplace Ashes.** Ashes from fireplaces and wood stoves shall be removed to the outside and stored in a container, with a tight fitting lid, which has been listed and approved by a nationally recognized testing laboratory. *Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (q)*
30. **Periodic Cleaning & Inspection.** Fireplaces, wood stoves, and chimneys shall be inspected and cleaned annually or as often as necessary to remove the buildup of creosote and other flammable residues. The provider shall have proof of inspection available on site for the Fire Code Official's review upon request. *Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (p)*
31. **Approved Wood Stoves.** Wood stoves shall be listed and approved by a nationally recognized testing laboratory. Wood stoves shall be used and installed in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications. The provider shall have the manufacturer's specifications available on site for the Fire Code Official's review upon request. *Fairfax County Code, Section 30-3-6.1 (o)*

Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities. Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. Materials such as this publication may be available in alternate

formats. To request reasonable ADA accommodations or materials in alternative formats, call the Office of the Fire Marshal at 703-246-4803 (TTY: 711 or 1-800-828-1120) or write us at the following address: 10700 Page Avenue, Fairfax, VA 22030.