

Background Information and Descriptions

EMERGENCY LIGHTS

Lights must illuminate a clear path to all designated fire exits. They should be tested each month by the owner and once a year by a certified professional to keep them in proper working order.

EXIT SIGNS

Signs must always be unobstructed, visible and brightly illuminated when the building is occupied.

EXTENSION CORDS & OCTOPUS PLUGS

Sufficient outlets must exist so appliances such as cash registers, debit machines, toasters, microwaves and fridges are not plugged into extension cords or octopus plug adapters.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Extinguishers must always be charged, inspected monthly and annually. Location is vital; all extinguishers must be fully accessible, display prominent signage and be in close proximity to exits on each floor. The maximum travel distance to get one is 82 ft. or 25m. Appropriate fire extinguishers must be installed to prepare for specific hazard types that can occur.

- Carbon dioxide and water-type extinguishers must receive hydrostatic testing every five years
- Dry chemical and vaporizing liquid-type extinguishers must receive hydrostatic testing according to the manufacturer's specification. Have the extinguishing agent in dry chemical extinguishers replaced every six years

FIRE SEPARATIONS

Any building with a mixed occupancy (example: a business with a residential unit above) must have a fire separation between the occupancies. This can often be accomplished with 5/8" fire-rated drywall, but a building permit may be required.

Appropriate fire-rated material must be used to fire-stop any holes or gaps in walls or ceilings where conduit, pipes, wiring and ductwork pass through. In addition, fire doors cannot be blocked or propped open.

BUILDING EXITS

Exits cannot be chained or dead bolted shut, and must not be obstructed by any item(s). Exit doors cannot require keys, special devices or specialized knowledge of the door opening mechanism to operate. In most cases, exit doors must swing open in the direction of exit travel.

CANDLES

Open flame decorations and lighting devices cannot be used unless approved or securely held in non-combustible holders.

FIRE ALARM SYSTEM

Components including the power and trouble lamps, trouble conditions and the central alarm and control facility should be checked daily. The entire system should be checked monthly. Components must be repaired by a certified fire alarm system professional.

Posted notification to occupants is required and a Fire Watch must be conducted and documented if and when the fire alarm system is under maintenance or is inoperable for any reason.

It is extremely important to keep the system's maintenance records on file and readily available for two years. The records should include all components checked, deficiencies noted and necessary repairs.

SPRINKLER SYSTEM

For properties with up to 300 sprinklers, six spare sprinkler heads (of the corresponding type) must be stocked and kept on hand. A wrench (suitable for replacing sprinkler heads) must be stored in the same area as the spare heads.

It is absolutely vital to test the system on a regular basis. See monthly checklist for recommendations. Maintenance records must be saved and made readily available for two years.

FIRE SAFETY PLANS

Mercantile Buildings with over 300 people must have an approved Fire Safety Plan. Also, mercantile buildings with residential occupancies attached need an approved Fire Safety Plan when there are more than 10 residents

Sample plans can be obtained from London Fire Services Fire Prevention Division at: 661-2500 ext. 4565.

Fire safety guidelines and fire safety plan information can be obtained from the Ontario Fire Marshal's web site at: <http://www.ofm.gov.on.ca/english/publications/guidelines/>

GENERAL

- Propane tanks and torches should not be stored inside
- Knob and tube electrical wiring must be properly maintained and modified correctly when additions are made
- Combustibles stored in basements and above stores cannot be in excessive amounts so as to increase fire load

Fire Inspection Checklist for Mercantile Occupancies

DAILY

FIRE EXITS

- Exit signs are clearly visible and brightly illuminated
- Exit corridors are unobstructed (garbage, boxes, etc.)
- Exit doors are not chained or bolted shut
- Fire escapes are clear of snow or other obstructions

FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS

- Fire extinguishers are clearly visible and unobstructed

FIRE ALARM SYSTEM

- Check fire alarm system to ensure power lamp is on
- Check fire alarm system to ensure trouble lamp is off

FIRE SEPARATIONS

- Basement and storage room doors are not wedged open

WEEKLY

GENERAL FIRE SAFETY

- Ensure that extension cords and/or octopus plugs are not being used in place of permanent wiring (i.e.- an extension cord may be used to temporarily set up a cash register outside for a sidewalk sale, ...etc.)

FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS

- Check unsupervised sprinkler system control valves to ensure they are open

MONTHLY

FIRE EXITS

- Test emergency lights (by owner or employee)

FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS

- Fire extinguishers are inspected (by owner or employee)
- Test sprinkler alarm using alarm-test connection. If monitored, notify alarm monitoring company.

FIRE ALARM SYSTEM

- Check fire alarm system standby power batteries
- Check fire alarm system operation

BI-MONTHLY AND SEMI-ANNUAL

FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS

- Sprinkler Systems require certain bi-monthly and semi-annual testing that should be conducted by a certified professional
- If you have a fire suppression system that is specific to your occupancy, you may require some additional tests to be completed by a certified professional (a log should be kept of any maintenance or testing that is performed)

ANNUAL

FIRE EXITS

- Test emergency lights to manufacturer's specifications

FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS

- Fire extinguishers shall be inspected annually. Check the hydrostatic test date stamped on the cylinder. If it due for testing, send it away for testing or replace it
- Check sprinkler heads to ensure they are free from damage, corrosion, grease, paint, dust or whitewash
- Check exposed sprinkler pipe hangers
- Test water flow on wet sprinkler systems using most remote test connection
- Test flow water supply using main drain
- Sprinkler fire department connections are equipped with plugs or caps that are secured wrench tight (Remove plugs or caps on fire department connections annually and inspect for wear, rust or obstruction)

FIRE ALARM SYSTEM

- Annual testing is conducted and a full record of the same available, including all components checked, deficiencies and necessary repairs are made by a properly trained, qualified, and certified professional

FIRE SEPARATIONS

- Perform a general inspection of fire separations (walls and ceilings between units) to ensure that any maintenance or renovation work done to the building in the past year has not breached any fire separations. If so, have them repaired immediately
- Perform a general inspection of the premises looking for fire safety hazards such as combustibles stored inside that could significantly increase the fire load, propane tanks stored inside, and unsafe electrical wiring

FIRE SAFETY PLANS

- If your business requires a Fire Safety Plan under the Fire Code, you should review it annually to incorporate any changes that may have occurred during the past year and train your staff in the new procedures

DEFINITIONS:

CHECK: Visual observation of the device

INSPECT: Physical examination to determine if it will function

TEST: Operate it to determine its performance ability

NOTE: This checklist is not exhaustive of the Fire Code. Specific code requirements may apply in each case and this brochure is intended as a guide only. The City of London and London Fire Services assume no responsibility for its use.

What Can I Expect?

Upon arrival at your business, the fire prevention inspector will endeavor to seek permission from the property owner, the owner's agent or tenant before entering the building and conducting the required inspection. Under the Fire Prevention and Protection Act, individuals are obligated, by law, to allow inspectors into their buildings.

- Among other items, they will check to see that:
 - There are sufficient smoke detectors and they are interconnected throughout all floors of the building
 - The building has basic fire safety items such as working fire extinguishers and emergency lighting
 - Extension cords and octopus plugs are not overloaded and are being safely used
 - Fire exits are not blocked or bolted shut
 - Sufficient fire separations exist between floors (sprinkler systems or drywall)
 - Exit signs are brightly illuminated and unobstructed

THE INSPECTION PROCESS



THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW



Inspection Costs
Initial inspections are completed free of charge. However, if an inspector finds a violation, the property owner will be charged a recall fee of \$45 plus GST at the time of re-inspection.

Enforcement of Violations
As a courtesy, recall inspections are scheduled approximately 30 days after the initial inspection. London Fire Services may grant a short extension if the work is in progress but incomplete at the time of the recall inspection. This will allow the property owner sufficient time to complete the work. By law, the property owner will be charged and prosecuted if repair work has not commenced.

Smoke Alarm Violations
If an inspector finds a building without working smoke alarms during the initial inspection, London Fire Services will charge the property owner immediately. The provincial fine for this offense is \$200 plus a \$35 victim surcharge.

Owner Responsibilities



OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Article 1.1.1.1. of the Ontario Fire Code states "Unless otherwise specified, the owner shall be responsible for carrying out the provisions of this Code." The Fire Code defines an owner as "any person, firm or corporation having control over any portion of the building or property under consideration and includes the persons in the building or property."

If you are the "owner" as defined above, you are responsible for compliance to all pertinent sections of the code. Ignorance of the law is no defense, so it is in your best interest to familiarize yourself with your requirements under the Code. Repair, replacement and maintenance of items that fall under applicable areas of the code should be part of your regular routine and considered an important part of conducting business in a fire-safe manner. The checklist on the other side, although not exhaustive of the Fire Code, is arranged to assist you in making this part of your regular routine.

Programs That Can Help

FINANCING PROGRAMS AVAILABLE



Property owners in areas with older buildings, such as downtown or Old East London, can take advantage of the City of London's Building Code Loan Program. This helps owners pay for interior improvements related to Fire or Building Code requirements.

The program offers interest-free loans of up to \$50,000 per property, with a pay back period of up to 10 years. For additional information on this program, call the City of London Planning Division at (519) 661-2500 ext. 4980

RESOURCES AVAILABLE



- The reverse side of this brochure offers a checklist and some background information to assist you in performing a self-assessment of your building's Fire Code and maintenance requirements. The first time through this checklist, you should check all of the items listed, regardless of the time frame in which they are shown. Please continue to use the checklists when performing your regular maintenance tasks throughout the year.
- A list of trained, certified and qualified Fire Service Professionals can be found under "Fire" in the Yellow Pages.
- Ontario Fire Code information is available at local bookstores or online at www.ofm.gov.on.ca. Click the legislation icon for more information.

Specific questions regarding your building or business should be directed to the London Fire Services - Fire Prevention Division. Contact them by phone at 661-2500 ext. 4565 or by fax at 661-8419. Additional resources may be available at MainStreet London or your local business association.

INTRODUCTION TO SELF-CHECKING MERCANTILE OCCUPANCIES



Reasons For Inspection

London's fire prevention inspectors have the safety of the entire community in mind. They focus their efforts on visiting properties that are traditionally considered to be the highest risk. These properties include those that have businesses and retail stores combined with residential areas in the same building or multi-unit residential apartment buildings. To increase efficiency, the inspections are usually completed in geographic blocks, which have been prioritized based upon the assessed level of risk.

Be Proactive

You can conduct a self-assessment of your building by using the checklist and descriptions on the reverse side of this guide. It is your responsibility to make repairs or to replace items before an inspector arrives, and to keep a log of all repair and maintenance work completed. A proactive approach may eliminate orders, charges and fees associated with any existing violations. Your first check should include all of the items listed, regardless of the timeframe in which they are shown. Please continue to use these checklists when performing your regular maintenance tasks throughout the year.



FIRE INSPECTION SELF-CHECK POCKET GUIDE

For Mercantile Occupancies

"E" type occupancies as defined in the Fire and Building Codes

Produced by the City of London, London Fire Services and MainStreet London to inform local business and property owners of their requirements under the Ontario Fire Code.

The City of London and London Fire Services work together to ensure that buildings are maintained in a fire-safe condition and that all occupants, customers and employees are safe.



This brochure and checklist are not exhaustive of the Fire Code and are intended as a fire safety guide **only**. Specific code requirements may apply in each case. The City of London and London Fire Services assume no responsibility for their use.