

# CLARENDON COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

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Title:

**Fire Company Hazard Survey**

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## **PURPOSE**

Fire inspections are an essential component of the Clarendon County Fire Department's overall fire mitigation effort. This guideline details the fire company inspection process. This effort is part of an overall coordinated effort to reduce losses of life and property due to fire and is managed in conjunction with a focused more intensive effort from the Fire Marshal's Office

## **Fire Safety Inspections – Company Inspection Program**

All career Firefighters will be required to conduct Fire Company Hazard Survey as part of their Pre-Planning activity. A list of business occupancies will be distributed annually to the Station Officers. The occupancies that require a Fire Marshal's Inspection and must be coordinated with the Fire Marshal's Office, will be provided on a separate list by the Station Officer. The occupancies on these lists will require a Hazard Survey in addition to Pre Fire Planning. Occupancies with engineered systems require a Fire Marshal's participation and must be coordinated with the Fire Marshal's Office. When the Pre Fire Plan and Fire Marshal Inspection is conducted together, a Hazard Survey is not required. It will be the Station Officers' responsibility to ensure the list is disseminated to each Division Shift and that the inspection is completed within the specified month. Inspections will be done with careful attention given to time efficiency and fuel conservation.

## **Guideline for vacant or not normally occupied locations.**

The initial attempt should begin with a phone call to contacts in Fire Programs for the purpose of scheduling an appointment. If that attempt is not successful, a visit to leave the Notice for pre-fire plans sign requesting someone call to schedule an appointment should be made. If, after 1 week, there is no response to that sign, return once more to secure another sign in a prominent location and note any exterior changes to the information provided. After a week with no response, notify the Fire Marshal's Office with the documentation of 3 failed attempts and any further contact will be handled by them.

## **Inspection Guidelines**

Upon arrival at the occupancy, promptly contact and introduce yourself to the primary contact (owner, manager, etc.). Explain the goal of your activity and request or verify that permission is granted to conduct the inspection. If permission is not granted, clarify the reason(s), leave the premises, and inform your Station Officer and the Fire Marshal of the circumstances. Ask that a person accompany you throughout the inspection; preferably a person with authority, knowledge, and/or ability to access locked or secured areas. The inspection should be organized so that all areas of the occupancy are viewed. It is recommended that Station Officers or designee call the occupancy or business prior to conducting the inspection.

Start outdoors working to the interior, or vice versa. Start at the lowest level working to the highest level. On each level, work from front to back, side to side, floor to ceiling, or what best serves the floor

arrangement. Each inspection should be thorough and systematic. View and evaluate all rooms and potential hazard areas including equipment and processes. Speculation and personal opinion on the inspection should be minimized. Instead, focus on the provided inspection form and the specific criteria it lists. Enter notations about hazards and violations onto the Fire Company Hazard Survey report, so they may be discussed when the inspection is complete.

Fire personnel will use the Department's designated Fire Company Hazard Survey Form to record and provide specific data and general information on possible hazards found in a commercial occupancy. The Fire personnel should carefully scan the form line by line to verify that all information is accurate and complete. Information contained on the report should be verbally summarized to the building occupant or property owner and signed. Prior to giving the original report to the building occupant, the Firefighter will take a picture of the form with the iPad. This will serve as paperless documentation for the department.

To scan the completed form with an iPad, use the following steps:

1. Place the document on a flat surface with a contrasting background
2. Open the "Dropbox" app on the iPad
3. Press the plus sign on the bottom left side of the screen and select "Scan Document"
4. Line the form up with the "Blue" outline and scan the document
5. Press "Next" on the top right of the screen and save the form to "Camera Uploads"

This will ensure the building occupant or property owner will be aware of the hazards found and corrective actions needed.

### **Concluding the Inspection**

Meet with the person of proper authority to review inspection findings. The person who accompanied the inspector may not be the person in the position to make corrections. Be organized and confident in the presentation of findings, especially those that should be corrected before leaving the premises. Protect the confidentiality of all information obtained during the inspection process.

The list below contains the types of violations that require immediate correction. If a company officer discovers a violation or hazard that appears to require immediate correction, but is not on this list, they should contact the Fire Marshal's Office for further instructions.

- A) Occupants are unable to leave a building.
- B) Required exit locked/inoperable from the egress side.
- C) Means of egress or exit way are substantially blocked or obstructed.
- D) Major portion or all of a fire protection system is hindered or inoperable, e.g., a sprinkler system supply valve is shut off, or all hydrants around a complex are inoperable.
- E) A hazard exists because flammable liquid storage is too near an ignition source and a fire is imminent.

## **Violations**

The Fire Marshal's Office shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with violations noted by Fire personnel. For informational purposes The Fire Marshal's Office will publish company inspection reports monthly to display the current disposition of original Fire Company Hazard Surveys that required follow-up.

## **Conflict Resolution**

Should a conflict arise where the fire company inspection is strongly opposed by a business occupant or property owner, or during the inspection, attitudes and/or cooperation regresses to the point where the inspection is not conducive to its intended purpose, the Fire personnel shall politely excuse himself/herself and exit the property with his/her crew. The Fire Marshal's Office shall be immediately notified of the situation. The Fire Marshal's Office will do a follow-up on the conflict and will seek resolution.

## **Enforcement**

The Department has a progressive code enforcement program designed to ensure compliance with applicable fire protection codes. The Fire Marshal's Office shall follow up on all violations noted and after repeated non-compliance, the business occupant or business owner may be issued a Notice of Violation. This notice outlines the specific sections violated of the International Fire Code; and also outlines potential punitive actions for non-compliance.

## **Report Filing, Entry, and Retention**

Any report completed for the purpose of a fire safety inspection shall be filed with the Fire Marshal's Office.

Fire Company Hazard Surveys shall be entered into Fire Programs by the following means:

- 1) A Company Report shall be entered using Company Report Type = "Pre-Plan/ Fire Company Inspection" - this will document all personnel involved, location, and duration of the inspection (\*\*NOTE: We will no longer use the Company Report Type - "Pre-Fire Plan")
- 2) An Inspection Report shall be entered under the Inspection tab for the Location (Business Name) where only the Pre-Plan was performed using inspection Type = "Pre-Plan"
- 3) An Inspection Report shall be entered under the Inspection tab for the Location (Business Name) where both the Pre-Plan and Fire Company Inspection was performed using Inspection Type = "Pre-Plan / Fire Company Inspection"

Additionally, the electronic copy of the Fire Company Hazard Survey form shall be uploaded from the iPad to Dropbox, upon returning to the Station through the following steps:

- 1) Open the Dropbox app
- 2) Choose "Photos" on the bottom of the screen
- 3) The "Camera Upload" should automatically begin, once the iPad is connected to a wireless internet access point

## **Forms**

All forms for Fire Company Hazard Surveys are located in:

- Dropbox
  - CCFD Team Folder
    - Public
      - CRR
        - CRR forms
          - Pre-Fire.

## **Training**

The department will provide training on Fire Company Hazard Surveys as needed to all Fire personnel of the Division's shifts.