

Top 10 ways to prevent fire inspection violations

1. **Secure all pressurized cylinders** (full or empty) to prevent falling. Never store gas grills with attached fuel tanks inside a building.
2. **Have all fire extinguishers inspected and tagged annually** by a qualified person. Fire extinguishers need regular maintenance to work properly. Also seek service when an extinguisher is discharged or shows signs of physical damage.
3. **Be sure that the building address is visible from the street.** Address numbers or other approved identification must be visible from the street fronting the property and plainly legible. Use numbers at least 4 inches tall on a contrasting background.
4. **Test your fire protection systems.** International Fire Code requires periodic testing of these systems, but the frequency varies depending on the type of component and can be annually, quarterly or monthly. Provide copies of current test reports to your inspector.
5. **Properly seal all openings in rated enclosures made for pipes, wiring and ducts.** A rated enclosure is built to contain a fire for at least one hour. Any size hole in any part of an enclosure is an invitation for fire to spread faster.
6. **Always brightly light exit signs.** Test bulbs and batteries regularly; replace when needed.
7. **Be sure exit doors can be opened in one motion.** Key locking hardware and thumb bolts are not allowed in most types of commercial businesses. Talk to your fire inspector about options.
8. **Be sure exit doors are working properly, clearly marked and unobstructed.** Doors to stairways and hallways should remain closed at all times to keep smoke and heat away from escape routes. Never store anything in exit ways.
9. **Provide adequate ceiling clearance for storage.** Stacked items can block exit signs and interfere with fire sprinkler systems. In sprinklered buildings, a clear space of 18 inches below the level of the sprinkler heads is required. In non-sprinklered buildings, the required clear space is 24 inches below the ceiling.
10. **Never use extension cords for permanently mounted devices.** Washers, dryers, refrigerators, built-in dishwashers, microwaves and wall ventilation fans typically are considered to be permanent. Never use an extension cord with air conditioners or space heaters. Extension cords may be approved for temporary uses only.

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