

**Texas Department of Insurance
State Fire Marshal's Office**

Group Day Care Home Fire Safety Evaluation Checklist
Revised April 2001

Name of Owner: _____ Telephone: _____

Mailing Address: _____

	Yes	No	Item
1.	•	•	Will this Group Day Care Home be operated in a single-story (no second floor or basement), single family residence building? If "No," please contact the State Fire Marshal's Office.
2.	•	•	Will the Group Day Care Home be the only business operated in the building? If "No," please contact the State Fire Marshal's Office.
3.	•	•	Is there a working smoke detector installed in each room used for sleeping?
4.	•	•	Does each sleeping room, dining area, and living area have at least one of the following secondary means of escape other than the "front" or "back" door of the home? A) A door leading directly to the outside; or B) An outside window with a minimum opening of not less than 5.7 sq. ft. in area, minimum of 20 inches wide, at least 24 inches high, and no higher than 44 inches above the floor are most often provided; or C) A non-locking door into an adjoining room that has a means of escape described in A or B above.
5.	•	•	Is every point in the Group Day Care Home within 150 feet of an exit to the outside?
6.	•	•	Is every door in the Group Day Care Home within 100 feet of an exit to the outside?
7.	•	•	Is every point in a sleeping room in the Group Day Care Home within 50 feet of an exit access door?
8.	•	•	Can a person move from any room in the Group Day Care Home to a door leading directly to the outside without having to pass through an interior door that can be locked?
9.	•	•	Can all primary exterior exit doors, windows used as a secondary means of escape, and any security bars incorporated with these primary and secondary means of escape, be opened from the inside without the use of a key, tool or special knowledge (security code, combination)?
10.	•	•	Are all draperies, curtains, and similar furnishings made of flame-resistant material?
11.	•	•	Are wastebaskets and trashcans made of noncombustible materials?
12.	•	•	Does student artwork or decorations attached to the walls cover less than 20 % percent of the wall area?
13.	•	•	Are flammable liquids stored in locked areas?
14.	•	•	Are all gas, wood, or fuel-fired heaters used in the home vented to the outside?
15.	•	•	Are heaters, including wood burning or gas log fireplaces, equipped with immovable screens or barriers to prevent contact with open flames or hot surfaces?
16.	•	•	Are exits checked daily by staff to ensure they are free from obstructions?
17.	•	•	Are monthly fire prevention inspections conducted by the owner and posted in a conspicuous area?
18.	•	•	Is there a fire escape route plan posted in each room?
19.	•	•	Are fire exit drills practiced at least once a month and documented?
20.	•	•	Are gas appliances (heaters, water heaters, stoves) equipped with metal tubing and metal connectors?
21.	•	•	Are all gas-fired heaters inspected annually by a qualified technician?
22.	•	•	Are combustible items (things that burn) stored away from any stove, heater, or fireplace in the Group Day Care Home?
23.	•	•	Are all lighters and matches kept out of the reach of children?
24.	•	•	Are flammable liquids stored in safety cans and kept away from heat and children?
25.	•	•	Is there an operable five-pound dry chemical fire extinguisher available for use in the kitchen?
26.	•	•	Does the electrical system appear to be in good condition?

Signature of owner: _____ Date: _____

Group Day Care Home

Fire Safety Evaluation Checklist

Instructions

This checklist is provided to the Group Day Care Home for the purpose of reviewing the State Fire Marshal's fire safety requirements. These requirements are taken from NFPA 101, *Life Safety Code*[®], a nationally recognized standard adopted by the State Fire Marshal, and are intended to provide a minimum standard of fire safety in Group Day Care Homes.

For the purpose of this inspection, an owner is defined as the adult having primary responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the Group Day Care Home, regardless of whom actually owns the home or building.

Using the checklist as a guide, review the fire safety requirements and answer each item "yes" or "no" with a check mark in the appropriate box. Any "no" checked items must be corrected in order to pass this inspection.

Explanation of each item on the checklist:

1. Group Day Care Homes with multi-story buildings or buildings with basements have special requirements. If the answer to this question is "No," contact the State Fire Marshal's Office for assistance.
2. Group Day Care Homes operated in a portion of a building that houses other businesses or residences have special fire safety requirements. If the answer to this question is "No," contact the State Fire Marshal's Office for assistance.
3. Smoke detectors shall receive power from the building electrical system or batteries. Check the smoke detector monthly for proper operation by pressing the test button or switch on the unit. Do not use a flame or smoke to test the unit. If a battery-powered smoke detector does not operate when tested, change the battery and retest. If the unit still does not work, replace the smoke detector. Any non-functional line-powered smoke detectors shall be replaced. Batteries shall be changed at least annually. Statistics show about one-third of the smoke detectors installed in homes are inoperative. When detectors are non-operational, the usual reason is dead or missing batteries. The detector(s) should be mounted according to manufacturer's instructions.
4. Every sleeping room and every living and dining area shall be provided with access to a secondary means of escape to the outside of the home in addition to the front or back doors. The purpose of the secondary means of escape is to provide an occupant with an alternate escape route when fire or other emergency blocks the primary exit from the Group Day Home.

Three types of secondary means of escape that are permitted:

- (A) A door that opens to the outside.

OR

- (B) The use of an openable window in the sleeping rooms and living areas of the home that provides an opening of not less than 5.7 sq. ft. in area, minimum of 20 inches wide, at least 24 inches high, and no higher than 44 inches above the floor are most often provided.

OR

- (C) Every sleeping room and living area without a secondary means of escape (as described in A or B above), has a passage, other than the hallway, to another room that has a means of escape as described in A or B above. The passage must not have any doors that can be locked. An example would be two bedrooms or living areas directly connected with a passage or door. A shared bathroom connecting two living area or sleeping rooms usually will not be acceptable because one or both of the doors could be locked, preventing passage from one room to the other.

Note: There are two exceptions to the requirement for secondary means of escape from each bedroom or living area: (1) if the bedroom or living area has a door opening directly to the outside of the building, or (2) where the Group Day Care Home is protected throughout by an approved automatic fire sprinkler system.

5. The most distant point in any room in the Group Day Care Home, measured along the path of travel to the nearest outside exit, may not be more than 150 feet.
6. The greatest distance from any interior room door in the Group Day Care Home cannot be more than 100 feet from the door to an exterior exit door.
7. The travel distance between any point in a sleeping room and the sleeping room door shall not exceed 50 feet.
8. No Group Day Care Home may have any interior door used in a path of escape that can be locked.
9. Primary exit doors and secondary means of escape, such as windows, and security bars that require a key, opening tool or special knowledge (security code, combination) are prohibited. Several multiple-death fires have occurred when a door lock could not be released because the key could not be found. The prohibition on these types of locks applies only to those doors or windows that are part of the required primary and secondary exits.
10. All draperies, curtains, and similar cloth furnishings should be made of fire resistive materials.
11. Any wastebaskets or receptacles shall be of metal or approved noncombustible material. Non-metal wastebaskets must bear the label of an approved testing laboratory.
12. Student artwork or other decorations must not cover large areas of wall space because a fire fueled by paper artwork can spread quickly down the halls, blocking the escape path for occupants.

13. Only designated individuals should have access to flammable liquids, such as rubber cement, paint thinner, or flammable paints. All flammable liquids should be kept in locked areas. Do not store these types of materials in the same closets or cabinets that house water heaters or heating and ventilation equipment.
14. Unvented heaters are not equipped with vents to the outside of the home. These heaters depend on regular maintenance, proper adjustment, and an adequate air supply for proper combustion. Unvented heaters can release lethal carbon monoxide into the home, deplete the oxygen levels in the home to dangerous limits, or provide an ignition source for a fire. Unvented heaters must bear the mark or label of an approved testing firm and be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and applicable safety codes.
15. It is important to provide safeguards to protect children from the hot surfaces of heating equipment. Children do not always understand the dangers of hot surfaces. Screens (barriers) that prevent children from accessing heating equipment must be of closely spaced wire or expanded metal and must be securely attached to parts of the building to prevent movement.
16. It is the duty of owners and staff to inspect all exits daily in order to make sure that all stairwells, doors, and other exits are in proper condition. Particular attention should be given to keeping all doors unlocked, keeping designated fire barrier doors closed, and keeping outside stairs free of ice and snow or any other material or equipment, such as play equipment, that could prevent the doors from opening or interfere with people escaping from the building.
17. Fire prevention inspections (**Items 3 -16 within this list**) shall be conducted monthly by the owner or a senior staff member. A copy of the latest inspection shall be posted in a conspicuous place in the Group Day Care Home.
18. Owners of Group Day Care Homes shall develop a fire escape plan that includes the location of the main and alternate exits from each area of the home, a single designated meeting point in a safe area, and actions each staff member and client should take in the event of a fire. The plan should include how infants or disabled residents will be taken out of the home.
19. Fire evacuation drills must be held at least once a month at different times of the day and night, and each staff member shall use the fire escape plan as a guide for their actions. Staff should be able to locate and describe how alternate exits such as windows will be used, but do not need to actually exit through the windows during the drill. All staff and clients must be familiar with the sound of the smoke detector alarms installed in the Group Day Care Home and should respond appropriately when the alarm is activated.
20. All gas appliances must be equipped with metal tubing and connectors, no rubber hoses.
21. All gas-fired heaters, including any central heating unit, should be inspected annually by a qualified person to ensure the unit is in proper working order to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

22. There should be no storage of any item that could burn (boxes, paper, clothing, wood scraps, blankets/pillows) near stoves, heaters, fireplaces, or other sources of flame or heat, including the gas water heater closets or other gas fired appliances.
23. All matches and or lighters must be out of the reach of children. Children playing with matches and/or cigarette lighters cause many deaths and millions of dollars in damage each year.
24. Flammable liquids should be stored in safety cans with the lids shut to prevent vapors from escaping the cans.
25. There should be a minimum of a five-pound portable fire extinguisher mounted on a wall in the area of the kitchen to extinguish small fires that may develop in or on the stove.
26. Extension cords are to be used on a temporary basis only. When the cords remain plugged in, they become part of the building wiring system. No frayed or spliced appliance cords are permitted because of the danger of a short circuit. All unused openings in the electrical circuit breaker box must be covered to prevent any material from coming in contact with live electrical wires.

NOTE

The above requirements set a minimum standard for fire safety in a Group Day Care Home. Special situations and circumstances may call for increased life safety requirements beyond those detailed above. Contact Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services day care licensing representative for any assistance. The State Fire Marshal's Office may be contacted to interpret fire safety requirements.