

*Taos County Fire & EMS Department  
Fire Marshal's Office  
Requirements for Residential Occupancy's*

Intro: Below is a list of the requirements for any residential building being used by the public. This includes nightly rental homes, Motels, Hotels, and B&B's.

Inspection Process: Each business is required to have an initial inspection before opening for the first time. This is when the maximum occupant load is determined. If any violation is found you will be required to correct it before occupancy of the building is granted.

Following that you are required to have at a minimum one fire inspection per year. It is at the Fire Inspectors discretion if more than one inspection will be required. If any violation is found during an inspection you will be given a time frame by the inspector in which the items in question must be resolved. Failure to resolve any violation may result in a court appearance and fines.

If a life safety issue is discovered during an inspection the inspector may at his/her discretion close the building and issue a Closure Notice until the issue is resolved.

Questions: If you have any questions please feel free to contact me and I will be happy to assist you.

1. **Fire Extinguishers:**

- a. **Required Places:** Fire Extinguishers are required to be located in certain places within the building. Each floor of the building that has any type of flame fired appliance (stove top range, oven, gas water heater, gas heater including central heat, wood or gas burning fire place) is required to have a fire extinguisher on that floor within 25 feet of that appliance. Also each garage is required to have a fire extinguisher.
- b. **Size and Type of Extinguishers:** For a residential occupancy the minimum size allowed is a 2-A-10-BC or a 5 Lb. The type of extinguisher required is an ABC rated extinguisher.
- c. **Storage:** Fire extinguishers can either be mounted to the wall in an easily visible place along the path of egress (how you would escape if an emergency happened) no higher than 5 feet off the floor and no lower than 4 inches from the floor. Or they can be stored in a cabinet (ie: under the kitchen sink). If they are stored in a cabinet, the cabinet must be labeled with a large label reading in bold red lettering "FIRE EXTINGUISHER".

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- d. **Maintenance/Inspections:** All fire extinguishers are required to have an annual inspection done by a certified company. Monthly checks- All extinguishers are required to have a monthly check done and documented on the back of the inspection tag. This can be done by either yourself or any of your staff members and consists of checking to make sure the extinguisher has not been discharged, damaged and that the gauge reads in the green.
2. **Smoke Detectors:**
    - a. **Required Places:** Each bedroom or room where people sleep (ie living room with pullout couch) is required to have a smoke detector either in that room or within 5 feet of the door to that room. Each floor of the building is required to have at least 1 smoke detector. All smoke detectors should be mounted no lower than 18 inches from the highest part of the room. They can be mounted to either the wall or ceiling.
    - b. **Types of Detectors:** There are many different types and brands of smoke detectors on the market. From our standpoint as long as it designed and listed as a SMOKE detector we will allow it. They do make combination CO and smoke detectors.
  3. **Carbon Monoxide Detectors:**
    - a. **Required Places:** Each sleeping area is required to have a CO detector. Also any space with a fuel burning appliance (ie: range top stove, wood burning fire place) is required to have CO detection.
  4. **Exits:**
    - a. **Number of Exits:** The number of exits is determined by the occupant load of the building and the sq. footage. This is determined by a Fire Inspector during the initial inspection of the building. Each exit should be easily opened from the inside at any time without the use of any special knowledge or keys.
    - b. **Exits from Bedrooms:** Every room that has people sleeping in it is required to have 2 points of egress. Most bedrooms accomplish this by having an opening window. If a window is used it must be able to open to a size no smaller than 5.7 sq. feet. This translates to an opening height of 24 inches and a width of 20 inches. This window must not have any locking mechanism other than a one move operation lock. This means that you would not have to make more than one part on the lock move one time to unlock it.
    - c. **Maintenance of the Exits:** Each exit is required to be kept free of any obstructions. This includes the buildup of ice and snow.

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5. **Utility/Water Heater Rooms:**
  - a. **Fire Rated Construction:** Each room that contains a gas or flame fired appliance is required to have all the walls, ceiling and floor rated to a 1 hour rating. This means 1/2 inch sheet rock or equivalent taped and bedded. All penetrations through the sheetrock are required to be fire rated as well. They sell spray on fire foams that work well for this. Vents should be fitted with a metal collar where they penetrate the sheetrock.
  - b. **Flammable Storage:** Nothing flammable should be stored in a utility room. This includes paint, oils, liquid ice melt, gas, diesel, liquor, and propane.
  
6. **Building Address:** The building address should be posted in the street side of the building in an easily visible place from the street. The numbers should be no smaller than 4 inches in height and should contrast there background. Reflective numbers are not required but are recommended.
  
7. **Fire places:** All wood burning fire places are required to have the chimney cleaned by a certified company at a minimum of once a year.

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