



CHARLESTON FIRE DEPARTMENT



Fire Marshal Division

Information Bulletin

Self Survey Fire Inspection – Short-Term Rental

Dear Applicant,

The Charleston Fire Department Fire Marshal Division conducts safety surveys as part of the City permit process for short-term rental properties. These surveys are intended to reduce fires by eliminating basic fire safety concerns, educating members of the community on potential hazards, and are intended to help you ensure a safe and livable community.

Please find on the following pages a self-survey that will assist you with assessing general safety and code compliance. Please take a few moments to conduct the survey and begin removing hazards as needed to protect the occupants, the property, and improve the potential of passing the inspection during the first visit. The survey must be completed, and corrections made, prior to the inspection by our team. As a reminder, this survey is intended as a guide and will assist with general compliance, but it is not all inclusive. It is your responsibility to know, understand, and comply with all appropriate rules and regulations.

Emergency and safety plans must be implemented to improve safety as well as establishing minimum expectations of your guests. You will need to:

- Develop an Emergency Plan: This is a written plan that provides specific guidance to employees, managers, and customers on how to respond to emergencies such as building evacuation, fire procedures, response to alarms, severe weather, etc.
- Evacuation Plans: Approved fire safety and evacuation plans must be posted on the interior side of all bedrooms used for short term rental.
- Training: Continual review, training, & updates for employees are a critical component to each plan.

Numerous internet resources are available to assist you in planning and preparations such as:

- NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) publishes “NFPA 1600: Standard for Disaster/Emergency Management and Business Continuity Programs”. www.NFPA.org.
- OSHA emergency plan system: www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/evacuation/expertsystem/default.htm
- FEMA emergency planning tips: www.fema.gov/business/index.shtm

The Charleston Fire Department is ready to assist you with preventing and responding to emergencies associated with your business. Feel free to contact our team 843-724-3429 or reach us at CFD@charleston-sc.gov with any additional questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Julazadeh
Chief Fire Marshal
Charleston Fire Department

Short Term Rental Fire Safety Self-Survey	Address: _____
	Business Name: _____
	Employee completing survey: _____ Date: _____

This survey is intended to assist with identifying and eliminating routine fire safety concerns, potential hazards, property issues, and ensure a safe and livable community. This form may serve as a guide and will assist with general compliance, but it is not all inclusive. It is your responsibility to know, understand, and comply with all appropriate rules and regulations.

Permit Documentation – Current and Posted in Public View	N/A	Yes	No
1 Valid Certificate of Occupancy posted, or location identified for new certificates, and within view of guests.			
2 Valid STR operational permit posted, or location identified for new permits, and within view of guests.			
3 Valid City Business License posted, or location identified for license, and within view of guests.			
4 The STR setup/layout is consistent with the application and floorplan submitted to the City.			
5 Emergency guide posted and/or readily available for guests to review.			
EXIT PATH	N/A	YES	NO
1 Exit path unobstructed, walkways are clear of storage or items that restrict exit width.			
2 Exit doors are easily accessible and unobstructed.			
3 Exit doors unlatch with a single operation so that anyone in the building can exit without delay.			
4 Exit doors open easily and completely.			
5 Clear exit path provided from the exit door to the public way, allowing guests to escape.			
6 At least 1 emergency escape and rescue opening per bedroom (qualifying operable window or 2nd direct exit door).			
7 Emergency escape and rescue openings are not obstructed or blocked (furniture, window AC units, or similar).			
8 All windows within bedroom operable, when only one is operable it must be clearly identified as the “Emergency Escape Opening”, by a sign of 2” letters on a contrasting background, and the sign cannot be obstructed from view.			
9 The common emergency exit path (when shared by multiple units) is marked by exit signs so it is easily identifiable.			
10 Exit signs and emergency lights, if applicable, are unobstructed and operable under normal and emergency power.			
STAIRS	N/A	YES	NO
1 Stairs, landings, areas under landings are clear of storage or debris.			
2 Stairs are provided with adequate and continuous lighting.			
3 Stairs are equipped with handrails.			
4 Stairs, landings, and handrails in good repair, free of rot, damage, trip hazards.			
FIRE EXTINGUISHERS	N/A	YES	NO
1 Sized appropriately for the hazard – not less than a 2A:10B:C rated extinguisher.			
2 Distributed based on the building – not less than one per level, within 75’ of all points of the rented space.			
3 Maintained at a visible and accessible location.			
4 Mounted on the wall, at least 4” above the floor and no higher than 5’ above the floor.			
5 Serviced and tagged by a licensed fire extinguisher vendor within the last 12 months.			
FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS (Components of the system, may include smoke “detectors” that are tied to fire alarm)	N/A	YES	NO
1 When present, have been serviced by licensed fire alarm contractor within in 12 months, deficiencies corrected.			
2 When present, alarm system panel(s) indicate all systems are normal.			
3 Fire alarm system devices such as pull stations, audio or visual alarms, or others are unobstructed and visible.			
SMOKE ALARMS (Smoke “alarms” are stand alone devices that are not connected to a fire alarm panel)	N/A	YES	NO
1 At least one smoke alarm installed on each level.			
2 Smoke alarm(s) installed outside of the sleeping area(s).			
3 Smoke alarm(s) installed inside of each sleeping area.			
4 All smoke alarms are operational.			
5 Verify interconnected smoke alarms cause connected devices to activate.			
6 Management is testing and documenting the monthly tests of smoke alarms.			
7 Management is testing & documenting at least annual battery replacement (exception for 10 yr. battery).			
8 Management is documenting the age of smoke alarms, verifying they are less than 10 years old.			
CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS	N/A	YES	NO
1 Required if the property includes an attached garage or utilizes fuel burning equipment, fireplaces, or similar.			
2 If required, CO alarm installed on each level.			
3 If required, CO alarm installed outside sleeping area(s).			
4 If required, CO alarm installed within sleeping area(s).			
5 If required, CO alarm installed in bedroom with fuel burning appliance.			

FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEM	N/A	YES	NO
1 When NFPA 13 or 13R present, serviced by licensed sprinkler contractor w/in 12 months, deficiencies corrected.			
2 Sprinkler system valves are open, and gauges have pressure.			
3 Stock, storage, displays, etc. is 18" below fire sprinklers, 2' below ceiling in non-sprinkled areas.			
4 Sprinkler heads clean and free of damage.			
5 Fire sprinkler valves are clearly labeled (indicating the area served).			
6 Sprinkler valves locked open or monitored by a fire alarm system.			
7 The fire department connection feeding the fire sprinkler or standpipe is easily accessible and labeled.			
8 Standpipe connections are accessible, protective caps are in place and are only hand-tight.			
FIRE DOORS & SEPARATION	N/A	YES	NO
1 Fire doors close completely without binding or sticking.			
2 Fire doors are self-closing, automatically close without assistance.			
3 Smoke barriers and partitions are maintained.			
4 Fire separation and fire ratings between units are maintained.			
HEATING SYSTEM	N/A	YES	NO
1 Fuel burning appliances are vented to the exterior.			
2 Visible elements of the vent are in good repair, free of breaks or holes, and sealed.			
3 Appliance and/or equipment covers are in place and secured to the appliance or equipment.			
4 Spacing of not less than 36" is maintained between combustibles (anything that will burn) and heating systems.			
5 System disconnects are labeled with the area and/or unit served (Includes heating and cooling system disconnects).			
6 Gas meters are labeled with the area and/or unit served.			
7 Permanent heat source is present and operational.			
ELECTRICAL	N/A	YES	NO
1 Extension cords are not utilized in place of permanent wiring.			
2 Temporary extension cords are in good repair, grounded as needed (grounded cords serving grounded appliances).			
3 Breaker box and panel covers are intact and closed.			
4 Breaker box and panels are labeled to identify the area served.			
5 Breaker circuits are labeled (current scheduled posted within the panel).			
6 Breaker panel slots are filled (no open breakers).			
7 Clearance is maintained around the electrical panel at all times (minimum: 30"wide x 36"deep x 78"high).			
8 All electrical junction box covers, conduit, or similar are intact.			
9 Electrical outlet covers and switch plates are secured and intact.			
SITE	N/A	YES	NO
1 Parking plan does not impede Fire Department access to the property.			
2 Site fire hydrants are visible and accessible.			
3 Open flame cooking (grills or similar) are not located on combustible balconies unless protected by a fire sprinkler.			
4 Open flame cooking is not conducted within 10' of combustible construction.			
5 Recreational fire pits are not within 25' of the structure or combustible material (includes fencing and vegetation).			
6 Recreational fire pits must be attended and provided with a 4A fire extinguisher or garden hose.			
GENERAL	N/A	YES	NO
1 Storage, stock, supplies, etc. are maintained in an orderly manner and not excessive to present a fire or safety hazard.			
3 The property street address & suite identification are posted in not less than 4" tall numbers and/or letters.			
4 Knox box for fire department entry, if applicable: equipped with current keys.			
5 Existing buildings (other than 1 & 2 family dwellings) International Existing Building Code assessment completed.			
6 Interior of structure and equipment therein maintained in good repair, structurally sound, and in a sanitary condition.			
7 Roof is in good repair, no known leaks or damage.			
8 Exterior of structure maintained in good repair, structurally sound, and sanitary.			
9 Exterior surfaces are weather tight, painted or sealed, to prevent rot and water intrusion.			
9 Exterior property areas are clean, free of trash and debris.			

The items contained on this checklist have been completed to the best of my ability. I have surveyed all exit routes and exits to verify they are unobstructed, the walking path does not present any hazards such as trip or fall hazards, and any needed stairs, guardrails, or handrails are in good repair. I understand this basic safety check is not all-inclusive and it is my responsibility to know and understand the necessary requirements. I understand that failure to maintain the property in accordance with the adopted codes, standards, and ordinances will lead to the revocation of my Operational Permit, Certificate of Occupancy, and or Business License.

Completed by: Print name

Completed by: Signature

Date