

CHARLESTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Marshal Division

Information Bulletin

Self Suvery Fire Inspection – New Business



Dear Community Partner,

The Charleston Fire Marshal Division conducts safety surveys prior to the issuance of a Business License Certificate of Occupancy (BLCO). These surveys are designed to improve safety by eliminating basic fire hazards, educating the community on potential hazards, and ensure a safe and livable community.

Please find on page 2 of this document a self-survey checklist to help you prepare for the BLCO inspection and assist with assessing general safety and code compliance within your building. Please take a few moments to complete the survey and begin making corrections as needed. This survey must be completed prior to requesting a BLCO inspection so that we may assist you in preparing to open as quickly as possible. You may find it useful to continue using this form on a routine basis in order to maintain and monitor the items outlined on this form.

We encourage all facilities to implement emergency and safety programs to improve employee and customer safety as well as business recovery. We recommend a safety plan that would incorporate the following:

- Emergency plan: A specific response plan that will offer guidance to employees on how to respond to emergencies such as building evacuation, fire procedures, response to alarms, severe weather, bomb threats, etc. These plans are required for some buildings but recommended for everyone.
- Disaster recovery plan: The recovery plan provides guidance on how to recover after an incident such as a fire or natural disaster and may include alternate worksites, backup storage process and location for critical data, and assembling employees after an incident.
- 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 me at 843-724-3429 or via e-mail at julazadehm@charleston-sc.gov with any additional questions or comments.

Sincerely,

An electronic signature of Mike Julazadeh, written in a cursive script. Below the signature, the text "Electronic signature" is visible.

Mike Julazadeh
Fire Marshal | Battalion Chief
Charleston Fire Department

Charleston Fire Department

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>New Business Self-Survey</i></p>	Address: _____ Business Name: _____ Employee completing survey: _____ Date: _____
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The Charleston Fire Department Fire Marshal Division conducts safety surveys prior to the issuance of a Business License Certificate of Occupancy (BLCO). These surveys improve safety by eliminating basic fire hazards, educating the community on potential hazards, and help to ensure a safe and livable community. This form is intended to assist you with general compliance items in your building - the list may not be all inclusive as requirements change based on occupancy type, use, and size. Facilities that have completed a BLCO Application for a new business change of name, or change of location must complete this form prior to requesting an inspection.

A. MEANS OF EGRESS	N/A	YES	NO
1 Exit doors are easily accessible and unobstructed. The door opens easily and to the full open position.			
2 Exit doors unlatch with a single operation so that anyone in the building can exit without delay.			
3 Fire doors are maintained in the closed position or are self closing. Fire doors are unobstructed and will fully close.			
4 Exit walkways are clear of stock, storage, or items that restrict exit width. A walkway at least 44" wide is provided.			
5 Stairwells (stairs, landing, areas under landing) are clear of storage. Continuous lighting provided in stairwell.			
6 The emergency exit path is marked by exit signs so it is easily identifiable to employees and the public.			
7 Exit signs and emergency lights are unobstructed and operable under normal and emergency power.			
B. FIRE PROTECTION			
1 Fire extinguishers: Size 2A:10B:C min., service tag or new tag within 1 year, mounted to wall <5' high, accessible			
2 Fire sprinkler and/or standpipes have been serviced by a licensed fire protection contractor within the last year.			
3 Fire sprinkler valves are clearly labeled (indicating the area served) and locked open or monitored by the fire alarm.			
4 The fire department connection feeding the fire sprinkler or standpipe is easily accessible and labeled.			
5 Stock, storage, displays, etc is 18" below fire sprinklers, 2' below ceiling in non-sprinkled areas, no higher then 12'.			
6 Standpipe connections are accessible, protective caps are in place and are only hand-tight.			
7 Kitchen hood, paint booth, or specialize extinguishing systems have been serviced within the last 6 months.			
8 Kitchen hood, paint booth, or other hood exhaust systems are maintained clean and are operating (running).			
9 Fire alarm system has been serviced by a licensed fire alarm contractor within the last year.			
10 Fire alarm devices such as pull stations, audio or visual alarms, or other devices are unobstructed and visible.			
C. HEATING SYSTEM			
1 Fuel burning appliances that are vented to the outside have the vent in place which is free of breaks or holes.			
2 Appliance and/or equipment covers are in place and secured to the appliance or equipment. .			
3 Spacing of not less than 36" is maintained between combustibles (anything that will burn) and heating systems.			
D. ELECTRICAL			
1 Extension cords are only used on a temporary basis, only for portable items, never in place of permanent wiring.			
2 Breaker box does not have any open slots or circuits, circuits are clearly labeled, breaker cover(s) remain closed.			
3 All electrical junction box covers, outlet covers, and switch plates are secured in place.			
4 Clearance is maintained around the electrical panel at all times (minimum: 30"wide x 36"deep x 78"high)			
E. GENERAL			
1 Storage, stock, supplies, etc. are maintained in an orderly manner and not excessive to present a fire or safety hazard.			
2 Flammable liquid is stored in approved metal safety cans and limited to 10 gallons unless otherwise approved.			
3 A MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet) is on site for all chemicals, the documents are posted and easily accessible.			
4 The property street address & suite identification are posted in not less than 4" tall numbers and/or letters.			
5 If the property has a Knox box for fire department entry: has the fire department been notified of any key changes?			
6 Fire Safety & Fire Evacuation plans prepared for review for all Assembly, Educational, and Institutional facilities			
F. REPORTS			
Inspection reports for the following systems must be maintained on site and available for review: Fire Sprinkler Systems, Standpipe Systems, Fire Pumps, Fire Alarms, Hood Suppression, Other Suppression, and Emergency Power Systems.			
BLCO INSPECTION CHECKLIST			
<input type="checkbox"/> Permits were obtained for all demolition, construction, renovation, electrical, plumbing, fire systems and all permits have been resolved.			
<input type="checkbox"/> A frame prepared to post the Certificate of Occupancy & Business License (8.5" x 14") within 15' of front entry door.			
<input type="checkbox"/> The New Business Self-Survey form has been completed, deficiencies corrected, and ready to provide to the Fire Inspector upon arrival.			