

Temporary Use of Non-residential Buildings to House Volunteers
Outline of Fire Safety Requirements

1. Application for a permit and plan: An application shall be submitted to the local fire official. The application shall include the location, name and contact information of the responsible party, the date(s) when the building will be used to house volunteers, the number of volunteers to be housed, including the number and ages of any volunteers who are under the age of 18, if any, a floor plan sketch showing the location(s) where volunteers will sleep, the other spaces to be made available to the volunteers and the exit access from each space.
2. Fire drills: A fire drill shall be conducted on the first day of occupancy by a given group of volunteers. The fire drill shall be repeated each time there is a changeover in the volunteers being housed. The fire drill shall include gathering at a designated spot outside the building and taking attendance to ensure all volunteers have evacuated safely. A record of all such fire drills shall be maintained and shall be made available to the local fire official upon request.
3. Supervision: There shall be one person remaining awake overnight in any building being used to house volunteers. When volunteers under the age of 18 are being housed, there shall be at least two persons providing overnight supervision. (Note: The person(s) assigned to stay overnight are to ensure the safety of the volunteers in the event of a fire or other emergency in the building. Adequate supervision for any minors being housed shall be the responsibility of the volunteer group involved.) The hosting facility shall train the person or persons assigned. They shall be familiar with the evacuation procedure to be followed in an emergency, with the building layout and with the fire detection or suppression systems, if any, and shall be capable of notifying the fire department in the event of an emergency. Emergency numbers, including numbers for those responsible for the facility, shall be posted in a conspicuous location. The person or persons assigned shall have a record of the names of all volunteers being housed on a given night.
4. Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms: Each sleeping room shall have battery-powered smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms. The smoke alarms shall be installed in the sleeping room(s) and throughout the exit access leading to the required exit or exits.

All smoke alarms shall be maintained in accordance with the State Fire Prevention Code (N.J.A.C. 5:70-3) Section 907.21. Monthly tests shall be conducted for other than battery powered smoke alarms and weekly tests shall be conducted for battery powered smoke alarms. A log shall be kept on site documenting the required testing. When smoke alarms are installed with 9 volt batteries, the batteries shall be replaced annually.

Buildings with automatic fire alarm systems with complete smoke detection installed shall be deemed to meet the requirement for smoke alarms.

5. Exits: Each sleeping room shall have at least two means of egress. The main means of egress shall be a door of not less than 32 inches in width. The second means of egress may be an emergency egress window or an exterior door. An emergency egress window shall have a sill height of not more than 44 inches and a minimum opening of 5.7 square feet measured from head to sill and side to side. The minimum width shall be 20 inches and the height shall be at least 24 inches. A second means of egress is not required when the sleeping room is served by an exit door to a corridor providing access to two remote exits or when the building is protected throughout by an automatic fire sprinkler system.
6. Location of sleeping rooms: Sleeping rooms shall be located at the level of exit discharge unless the building is equipped throughout with an automatic fire alarm system. Sleeping in a basement shall not be permitted unless the building is equipped throughout with an automatic fire sprinkler system.
7. Vertical opening protection: A minimum one-hour fire barrier shall be provided to protect all interior stairways and other vertical openings. Existing 30 minute vertical opening protection shall be allowed to remain in buildings housing 25 or fewer volunteers or in buildings where all sleeping rooms are located at the level of exit discharge.
8. Habitable space: Each sleeping room shall provide at least 40 square feet per occupant.
9. Lighting: Artificial lighting of a minimum of one foot candle shall be required at all times throughout the space to be occupied by the volunteers including any exit access and exit discharge.
10. Emergency egress lighting and exit signs: Egress lighting and illuminated exit signs shall be required for any building housing 50 volunteers or more.
11. All buildings housing volunteers shall be subject to quarterly inspection by the local fire official.