



Department of Community Affairs



Division of Fire Safety

Bureau of Fire Code Enforcement

Temporary Use of Non-residential Buildings for Housing Outline of Fire Safety Requirements

1. The owner/operator shall submit a plan to the local fire official, which must include the following information: the location, name and contact information of the responsible party, the date(s) when the building will be used for housing, the number of persons to be housed, a floor plan showing the location(s) where those being housed will sleep, the other spaces to be made available to them, and the exit access from each space.
2. Fire drills: A fire drill shall be conducted on the first day of occupancy and procedures must be reviewed when new persons are brought into the occupancy. The fire drill shall include gathering at a designated spot outside the building and taking attendance to ensure all persons 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 designated by the operator remaining awake overnight in any building being used for housing. (Note: The local person(s) designated by the operator assigned to stay awake overnight are to ensure the safety of the housed persons in the event of a fire or other emergency in the building.) The person or persons assigned 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 persons 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 and carbon monoxide alarms shall be maintained in accordance with the State Fire Prevention Code (N.J.A.C. 5:70-3). 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. Smoke alarms must be of the ten-year sealed battery type at a minimum.

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 persons 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, 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 persons or more.
11. All buildings being used for temporary housing shall be subject to quarterly inspection by the local fire official.

Revised: November 30, 2020