



# HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

410-313-6000

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## Office of the Fire Marshal Adoption and Foster Care Homes Pre-Inspection Checklist

A fire safety inspection will be conducted by the Office of the Fire Marshal at your home. This fire safety inspection will assist you in providing a safe atmosphere for you, your family and protecting your home. Our goal is to educate you and your family in maintaining a fire safe environment which is one step in leading to a fire safe Howard County.

In order to streamline the process, there are several items that can be corrected prior to the inspection. We have prepared this list for your review prior to the inspection and for future self-inspections.

**Exterior of Home** - House numbers should be clearly visible from the street. The numbers shall be at least three (3) inches high on a contrasting background. The exterior of the residence shall be kept clear of leaves and combustibles.

**Sleeping Rooms** - Sleeping areas must have two (2) separate means of escape. One (1) of which must be a door. If a window is a secondary means, the window must provide a clear opening of not less than 5.7 square feet with a minimum twenty (20) inches in width and twenty four (24) inches in height. The bottom of the opening shall not be more than forty four (44) inches above the floor.

**Family Escape Plan** – Develop an escape plan that includes the location of the main and alternate exits from each area and a designated meeting point outside. Practice fire exit drills from each room in the home. Train each member of the family how to report a fire or medical emergency.

**Heating Equipment** – A thirty-six (36) inch clearance of combustibles shall be maintained around all heat producing devices. Heating equipment should be serviced per manufacturer's recommendations and maintained in good repair. Fireplaces, woodstoves, etc. should be used properly, screened, and flues periodically serviced and cleaned. Chimneys should be cleaned at least once per year. Space heaters should cut off when tipped over.

**Electrical** - Electrical outlets should have covers and be safely loaded. All storage shall be kept thirty-six (36) inches away from all electrical panels. Panel box doors must be latched closed. Blanks shall be placed in open panels. Outlets shall not be overloaded.

**Extension cords** - Extension cords shall not be utilized as permanent wiring. Extension cords must be sized to the device in use. A breaker protected, strip outlet and/or permanent wiring shall be utilized when multiple or additional outlets are needed. Multiple strips or extension cords shall not be chained together to form a longer service. All cords and equipment shall be listed by a testing laboratory recognized by the State of Maryland. Appliance cords should be kept in good repair and properly grounded.

**Storage** – Good general housekeeping should be maintained. Exits shall be free of obstructions. All household chemicals and matches should be stored away from children. All paints, solvents, waxes, and flammables and combustible liquids shall be stored outside or in cabinets. Gasoline powered equipment shall not be stored in the home unless fuel tanks are completely drained. Attics, closets, basements, and garage areas should be kept free of accumulated of combustibles.

**Smoke Alarms** - Smoke alarms should be in working order and tested monthly. Your home should meet the smoke alarm requirements in place when the house was built. There shall be a minimum of one (1) smoke alarm on each level including the basement and in all sleeping rooms regardless of when your house was built.

**Fire Extinguishing Devices** - The home shall be equipped with at least one portable fire extinguisher of Class 2A10 BC rating (recommended for adoption homes). Home sprinkler systems shall be maintained per the manufacturer/installer's recommendations. Sprinkler heads must be unobstructed, have nothing hanging from them and be free of paint and corrosion.

**Bathroom/Closets** - Bathrooms locks shall be designed to permit the emergency opening of a locked door from the outside. Closet doors must be openable from inside the closet.

**Kitchen** – The hood vent should be clean and maintained per manufacturer's directions.

All fire code violations must be corrected immediately.

**All violations deemed by the fire inspector to be an immediate hazard to life safety shall be corrected on the spot.**

Per County Code Howard County Department of Fire & Rescue Services charges for fire inspections, re-inspections and any associated services. You will receive an invoice in the mail from the Department of Finance after the inspection is within compliance and all paperwork has been completed.