

Fire Marshal Inspection Checklist

Pre-Inspection Readiness Guide for Florida ALFs

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Licensed Fire Extinguisher Technician + Active ALF Administrator

About This Checklist

This checklist is designed to help Florida Assisted Living Facility administrators prepare for Fire Marshal inspections. Use it 30 days before a scheduled inspection (or quarterly for ongoing readiness) to identify and correct potential deficiencies before the Fire Marshal arrives.

Fire Marshal inspections focus on:

- Fire safety equipment (extinguishers, alarms, sprinklers, emergency lighting)
- Exit routes and signage
- Fire drill documentation
- Staff training records
- Hazardous materials storage

This is different from AHCA surveys, which cover broader facility operations including staffing, resident care, medications, and administrative compliance.

30 Days Before Inspection

Fire Extinguisher Systems

- All extinguishers are mounted and accessible

- Not blocked by furniture, equipment, or storage
- Mounted at proper height (top of extinguisher no more than 5 feet from floor)
- Clearly visible with signage
- **[] Inspection tags are current**
 - Monthly inspection tags show checks for the past 12 months
 - Annual certification tags are dated within the past year
 - Tags are legible and properly filled out
- **[] Extinguishers are properly charged**
 - Pressure gauge in green zone
 - No visible damage (dents, rust, leaking)
 - Pull pin and tamper seal intact
- **[] Correct type and quantity for facility size**
 - Extinguishers within 75 feet of any point in the facility
 - Kitchen has Class K extinguisher for cooking fires
 - Adequate coverage for square footage
- **[] Hydrostatic testing up to date** (if applicable)
 - Required every 5-12 years depending on extinguisher type
 - Test date stamped on cylinder

Common Deficiencies:

- Missing monthly inspection tags
 - Extinguishers blocked by furniture or equipment
 - Pressure gauge in red zone (needs recharging)
 - Missing or illegible annual certification tags
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Smoke Detectors & Fire Alarm Systems

- **All smoke detectors are functional**
 - Test each detector using test button
 - Replace batteries in battery-operated units
 - Document test results with date and initials
- **Smoke detectors are properly located**
 - In every resident room
 - In hallways and common areas
 - Near kitchen and laundry areas
 - Not painted over or covered
- **Fire alarm panel shows no faults**
 - Panel displays normal operating status
 - No trouble lights or error codes
 - Backup battery is functional
- **Annual fire alarm inspection is current**
 - Inspection performed by licensed fire alarm company
 - Inspection certificate on file and dated within past year
 - All deficiencies from last inspection corrected
- **Audible alarms are loud enough**
 - Can be heard in all areas of facility
 - Test alarm volume during fire drill

Common Deficiencies:

- Smoke detectors with dead batteries
- Missing smoke detectors in resident rooms
- Fire alarm panel showing trouble codes
- Expired annual inspection certificate

Emergency Lighting & Exit Signs

- **All exit signs are illuminated**
 - Visible from all areas of facility
 - Bulbs are working (not burned out)
 - Signs are clean and legible
- **Emergency lights are functional**
 - Test by cutting power to verify battery backup works
 - Lights illuminate for at least 90 minutes on battery
 - Located along all exit routes
- **Exit routes are clear and unobstructed**
 - No furniture, equipment, or storage blocking exits
 - Doors open freely without obstruction
 - Minimum 36-inch clear width in hallways
- **Exit doors are properly marked**
 - “EXIT” signs above all exit doors
 - No misleading signs or decorations near exits
 - Exit maps posted in common areas

Common Deficiencies:

- Exit signs with burned-out bulbs
- Emergency lights that don't activate on battery backup
- Exit doors blocked by furniture or equipment
- Missing or faded exit signage

Sprinkler Systems (if applicable)

- **Sprinkler heads are unobstructed**

- 18-inch clearance below each sprinkler head
 - No storage, decorations, or furniture blocking heads
 - Heads are not painted over
- **Sprinkler system inspection is current**
 - Annual inspection by licensed fire protection company
 - Inspection certificate on file and dated within past year
 - Water flow alarm tested and functional
- **Sprinkler control valve is accessible and open**
 - Valve is not locked or obstructed
 - Valve is in fully open position
 - Valve is clearly labeled
- **No missing or damaged sprinkler heads**
 - All heads are intact (not broken or leaking)
 - Correct type of head for each area (standard, quick-response, etc.)
 - Heads are properly spaced per code

Common Deficiencies:

- Storage too close to sprinkler heads (less than 18 inches clearance)
 - Expired annual inspection certificate
 - Sprinkler heads painted over or obstructed
 - Missing sprinkler heads in renovated areas
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Fire Doors & Rated Assemblies

- **Fire doors close and latch properly**
 - Self-closing mechanisms work correctly
 - Doors fully close without propping open
 - Latches engage when door closes

- **Fire door hardware is functional**
 - Panic bars and exit devices work smoothly
 - No missing or broken hardware
 - Doors are not locked from inside (unless approved delayed egress)
- **Fire doors are not propped open** (unless held by approved magnetic hold-open devices tied to fire alarm)
 - No wedges, door stops, or furniture holding doors open
 - Magnetic hold-open devices release when fire alarm activates
- **Fire-rated walls and penetrations are sealed**
 - No holes or gaps in fire-rated walls
 - Penetrations (pipes, wires) are properly fire-stopped
 - Fire-rated ceilings are intact (no missing tiles)

Common Deficiencies:

- Fire doors propped open with wedges or furniture
 - Self-closing mechanisms not working (doors don't close fully)
 - Penetrations in fire-rated walls not properly sealed
 - Missing or damaged fire door labels
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Hazardous Materials Storage

- **Flammable liquids are properly stored**
 - Stored in approved flammable storage cabinet
 - Quantities limited per code (typically 10 gallons max outside cabinet)
 - Containers are labeled and sealed
- **Oxygen storage is compliant**
 - Cylinders secured upright with chains or straps
 - “No Smoking - Oxygen in Use” signs posted

- Stored away from heat sources and flammable materials
- Minimum 5-foot separation from flammable gas cylinders
- **Cleaning supplies are properly stored**
 - Not stored near heat sources or electrical panels
 - Containers are labeled and sealed
 - Adequate ventilation in storage areas
- **Propane tanks are stored outdoors** (if applicable)
 - Not stored inside building
 - Secured upright and away from exits
 - Minimum 10-foot separation from building openings

Common Deficiencies:

- Oxygen cylinders not secured upright
 - Flammable liquids stored in unapproved containers
 - Cleaning supplies stored in electrical rooms
 - Propane tanks stored indoors
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14 Days Before Inspection

Fire Drill Documentation

- **Fire drills conducted monthly**
 - At least one drill per month for past 12 months
 - Drills conducted on different shifts (day, evening, night)
 - Documentation includes date, time, shift, and staff initials
- **Fire drill logs are complete**
 - Time to evacuate recorded
 - Any problems or deficiencies noted

- Corrective actions documented
- Logs signed by administrator or designee
- **All shifts have participated in drills**
 - Day shift drills documented
 - Evening shift drills documented
 - Night shift drills documented (at least quarterly)
- **Evacuation routes are practiced**
 - Primary and secondary routes used during drills
 - Staff know how to assist residents with mobility limitations
 - Assembly point is clearly designated

Common Deficiencies:

- Missing fire drill documentation for one or more months
 - No night shift fire drills in past year
 - Incomplete drill logs (missing time, staff signatures, or corrective actions)
 - Drills not conducted on all shifts
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Staff Training Records

- **All staff trained on fire safety procedures**
 - Initial orientation includes fire safety training
 - Annual refresher training documented
 - Training covers evacuation procedures, extinguisher use, and alarm activation
- **Training documentation is complete**
 - Training date, topic, and duration recorded
 - Staff signatures on training attendance sheets
 - Training materials on file (handouts, videos, etc.)

- **Staff know their roles during fire emergency**
 - Who calls 911
 - Who assists residents with evacuation
 - Who checks all rooms
 - Who accounts for residents at assembly point
- **New staff trained within required timeframe**
 - Fire safety training within first week of employment
 - Documentation on file for all new hires

Common Deficiencies:

- Missing training documentation for some staff members
 - No annual refresher training documented
 - New staff not trained within required timeframe
 - Training records not signed by staff
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Emergency Plans & Diagrams

- **Fire evacuation plan is posted**
 - Posted in common areas and resident rooms
 - Shows primary and secondary exit routes
 - Shows location of fire extinguishers and pull stations
 - Diagrams are current (reflect recent renovations)
- **Emergency contact list is current**
 - Fire department, police, EMS phone numbers posted
 - Administrator and on-call manager contact info current
 - List is visible near main phone or office
- **Facility emergency plan is up to date**
 - Plan reviewed and updated annually

- Includes fire emergency procedures
- Staff have access to plan
- **Resident evacuation needs are documented**
 - List of residents needing assistance during evacuation
 - Mobility limitations noted (wheelchair, walker, bed-bound)
 - Staff assignments for assisting specific residents

Common Deficiencies:

- Evacuation diagrams not posted in all required areas
 - Diagrams don't reflect recent renovations or room changes
 - Emergency contact list outdated
 - No documentation of residents needing evacuation assistance
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7 Days Before Inspection

Final Walkthrough

- **Conduct facility walkthrough with checklist**
 - Check all items on this checklist
 - Bring clipboard and pen to note deficiencies
 - Take photos of any issues for follow-up
- **Test all fire safety equipment**
 - Test smoke detectors
 - Test emergency lighting
 - Test exit door hardware
 - Verify fire extinguisher pressure
- **Organize all documentation**
 - Fire drill logs for past 12 months

- Staff training records
- Equipment inspection certificates
- Corrective action documentation
- [] **Correct any deficiencies found**
 - Replace burned-out bulbs in exit signs
 - Recharge low-pressure fire extinguishers
 - Remove obstructions from exit routes
 - Update missing fire drill logs

Final Checklist:

- All fire extinguishers inspected and tagged
 - All smoke detectors tested and functional
 - All exit signs illuminated
 - All emergency lights tested
 - All exit routes clear
 - All fire doors close properly
 - All hazardous materials properly stored
 - Fire drill logs complete for past 12 months
 - Staff training records current
 - Evacuation diagrams posted and current
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Day of Inspection

When the Fire Marshal Arrives

DO:

- Greet the Fire Marshal professionally
- Ask to see credentials (Fire Marshal ID)
- Offer to accompany them during inspection

- Have documentation ready (fire drill logs, training records, inspection certificates)
- Answer questions honestly and directly
- Take notes on any deficiencies identified
- Ask for clarification if you don't understand a requirement

DON'T:

- Refuse entry or delay inspection
- Over-explain or volunteer unnecessary information
- Make excuses for deficiencies
- Promise to fix things you can't immediately address
- Argue with the Fire Marshal about code requirements
- Sign anything you don't understand

Documentation to Have Ready

- Fire drill logs (past 12 months)
- Staff fire safety training records
- Fire extinguisher inspection tags and annual certifications
- Fire alarm system annual inspection certificate
- Sprinkler system annual inspection certificate (if applicable)
- Emergency lighting test records
- Facility emergency plan
- Resident evacuation assistance list

After the Inspection

- **Review inspection report carefully**
 - Note all deficiencies and violations
 - Understand correction deadlines
 - Identify items needing immediate attention

- [] **Develop corrective action plan**
 - List each deficiency
 - Assign responsibility for correction
 - Set target completion dates
 - Budget for any equipment or service needs

 - [] **Correct deficiencies promptly**
 - Address life-safety issues immediately
 - Schedule equipment repairs or replacements
 - Update documentation as needed
 - Document all corrective actions taken

 - [] **Follow up with Fire Marshal**
 - Submit proof of correction by deadline
 - Request re-inspection if required
 - Maintain documentation of all corrections
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Common Fire Marshal Violations & How to Avoid Them

Top 10 Most Common Violations

1. Missing or expired fire extinguisher inspection tags

- **Solution:** Hire licensed fire extinguisher company for monthly inspections and annual certifications

2. Fire extinguishers blocked or inaccessible

- **Solution:** Conduct monthly facility walkthrough to ensure clear access to all extinguishers

3. Exit routes obstructed by furniture or equipment

- **Solution:** Maintain 36-inch clear width in all hallways and exit routes; mark floor with tape if needed

4. Exit signs not illuminated or emergency lights not functional

- **Solution:** Test emergency lighting monthly; replace batteries and bulbs promptly

5. Incomplete fire drill documentation

- **Solution:** Use standardized fire drill log form; assign administrator to review logs monthly

6. Fire doors propped open

- **Solution:** Install magnetic hold-open devices tied to fire alarm; train staff never to prop doors

7. Storage too close to sprinkler heads

- **Solution:** Mark 18-inch clearance zone below sprinkler heads with paint or tape

8. Expired fire alarm or sprinkler system inspection certificates

- **Solution:** Schedule annual inspections 11 months after last inspection; set calendar reminders

9. Oxygen cylinders not properly secured

- **Solution:** Install wall-mounted cylinder brackets or floor stands; train staff on proper storage

10. Missing smoke detectors or detectors with dead batteries

- **Solution:** Test all smoke detectors monthly; replace batteries annually (or use 10-year sealed units)

When to Call SafeGuard Compliance Partners

We can help you prepare for Fire Marshal inspections:

- **30-60 days before inspection:** Comprehensive pre-inspection walkthrough and deficiency identification
- **Equipment issues:** Fire extinguisher service, testing, and certification
- **Documentation gaps:** Fire drill log review, staff training coordination
- **On-call support:** Available by phone during Fire Marshal inspection to answer technical questions
- **Post-inspection:** Corrective action plan development and implementation support

Contact Us:

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Disclaimer

This checklist is provided for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal or professional advice. Fire safety requirements vary by jurisdiction and facility type. Always consult with your local Fire Marshal's office and legal counsel to ensure compliance with applicable codes and regulations.

SafeGuard Compliance Partners is a technical consulting service. We do not assume administrator responsibilities or represent facilities during inspections. Facility administrators retain full responsibility for compliance with all applicable fire safety regulations.

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