BLACK FOREST FIRE RESCUE

Fire Safety for Your Business

A photo guide for business owners and managers

BLACK FOREST FIRE RESCUE

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Find the way out

Exit signs and emergency lighting

Lighted EXIT signs

2021 IFC 1013; 1032.4



Keep the sign visible from the route people use to leave.

LIGHTED, NOT PAPER

WHAT THE CODE REQUIRES

Required EXIT signs must stay illuminated. A printed paper sign or ordinary unlit placard does not replace a required illuminated sign. Required electrically powered signs need emergency power.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Check that every required sign is lit. Remove decorations or stock hiding it. Have failed lamps, batteries or signs repaired. Keep arrows pointed toward the correct exit.

WHAT WE CHECK

Visible, illuminated signs in the required locations, with working backup illumination.

Emergency lights

2021 IFC 1032.10.1-1032.10.2



Emergency-light fixtures help people leave when normal power fails.

30 SECONDS / 90 MINUTES

WHAT THE CODE REQUIRES

Test required emergency lighting for at least 30 seconds each month. Battery-powered emergency lights also need a 90-minute battery test each year. Approved self-testing units have their own verification procedures.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Keep a log showing the date, test duration, result and person testing. Arrange repair when a light fails. A quick push of the test button does not prove a battery lasts 90 minutes.

WHAT WE CHECK

Lights operate on emergency power and dated testing records are available.

Fire extinguishers

Professional service and correct placement

Have them serviced and tagged

2021 IFC 906.2; NFPA 10



The service tag is your record of professional maintenance.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE YEARLY

WHAT THE CODE REQUIRES

Extinguishers require annual maintenance by qualified, certified personnel and routine monthly inspections. BFFR expects annual service and tagging by a professional fire-extinguisher service company.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Book annual service; keep the company’s dated tag attached. Each month, check access, condition, pin/seal and gauge where fitted, and record your check. After any use, arrange service or replacement immediately.

WHAT WE CHECK

Current professional service tags, monthly check records and equipment in serviceable condition.

Mount them where they can be reached

2021 IFC 906.3; 906.5-906.9



Keep the extinguisher visible, on its bracket or in its cabinet.

TOP: 5 FT MAXIMUM*

WHAT THE CODE REQUIRES

For hand-held units up to 40 lb, the top must be no higher than 5 ft; over 40 lb, no higher than 3½ ft. Keep the bottom at least 4 in above the floor. *The 5-ft limit applies only to units up to 40 lb.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Keep access clear. Ask your service company to confirm the number, rating and locations for your hazards. Class A coverage generally has a 75-ft maximum walking distance; other hazards differ. Do not use a blanket “one per 3,000 sq ft” rule.

WHAT WE CHECK

Correct type, quantity, travel distance, identification, mounting and access.

Keep every exit usable

Walkways, doors and locks

Keep the entire escape route clear

2021 IFC 1005; 1006; 1032.2



A clear hallway must continue to a clear door and safe outside route.

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE

WHAT THE CODE REQUIRES

Maintain the approved number of exits and required width of aisles, corridors, stairs and doors. The route must stay usable all the way outside; storage, snow and ice cannot block it.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Move chairs, displays, boxes and carts out of the exit route. Clear door swings, landings and outside paths. Keep the posted occupant limit where required; do not increase seating or change layouts without review.

WHAT WE CHECK

The full route is clear and its width suits the approved occupancy and number of people.

Doors must open from inside

2021 IFC 1010.2; 1010.2.9



Push-bar hardware releases the latch when operated correctly.

NO KEY NEEDED TO ESCAPE*

WHAT THE CODE REQUIRES

Exit doors generally must open from inside without a key, tool or special knowledge while people are inside. Panic hardware is required for certain uses and occupant loads, including many assembly and educational spaces serving 50 or more people.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Remove chains and unapproved secondary locks. Test each door. Before adding a keypad, deadbolt or electronic lock, have BFFR review it. *Limited code-approved locking arrangements exist; do not assume a sign makes a lock acceptable.

WHAT WE CHECK

Easy operation, approved locking and required panic hardware.

Use electrical cords safely

Extension cords, power strips and heaters

Extension cords are for portable use

2021 IFC 603.6



Select a cord listed and rated for the appliance and conditions.

NOT PERMANENT WIRING

WHAT THE CODE REQUIRES

Extension cords cannot replace permanent wiring. They must be listed, undamaged and suitable for the load. Use a grounding cord when the appliance requires grounding.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

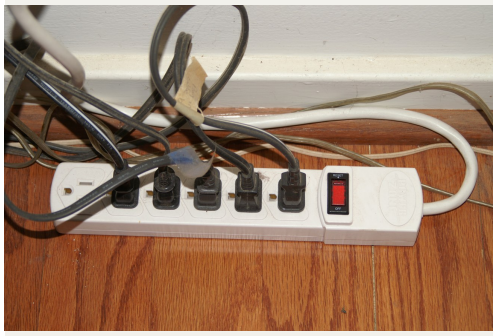
Have outlets installed where power is regularly needed. Do not run cords through walls, ceilings, floors, under doors or rugs. Remove frayed, crushed or spliced cords. Use outdoor-rated cords outdoors.

WHAT WE CHECK

No permanent cord wiring, damage, improper routing or undersized cords.

Power strips and space heaters

2021 IFC 603.5; 603.9



A strip’s rating matters; counting plugged-in devices is not enough.

WALL OUTLET → POWER STRIP

WHAT THE CODE REQUIRES

Listed power strips normally connect directly to a permanent wall outlet. Do not link strips together. Portable electric heaters must connect directly to an approved outlet and stay at least 3 ft from combustible materials.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Unplug daisy-chained strips and remove unsafe adapters. Follow equipment ratings. Never run a space heater from an extension cord or power strip. Keep paper, curtains and furniture away from heaters.

WHAT WE CHECK

Listed equipment, proper connections, safe loading and heater clearance.

Make electrical equipment safe

Clear space, covers and identification

Keep panel working space empty

2021 IFC 603.4



Covers have been removed in this photo. Only qualified personnel should expose wiring.

30 W × 36 D × 78 H IN.

WHAT THE CODE REQUIRES

The basic minimum working area is 30 in wide, 36 in deep and 78 in high. If the equipment is wider than 30 in, use its full width. Equipment conditions can require more space.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Move stock, furniture and cleaning supplies out of this space. Keep access available. Do not use the panel area for temporary storage. An electrician can verify the required clearance for your equipment.

WHAT WE CHECK

Clear working width, depth and height, with no stored materials.

Cover wiring and label rooms

2021 IFC 603.2; 603.4.1; 509



Open wiring and missing covers need qualified repair.

COVERS ON • LABELS READABLE

WHAT THE CODE REQUIRES

Electrical boxes and outlets need approved covers. Open splices and hazardous wiring are not allowed. Electrical control-panel rooms and required fire-system rooms need identification; circuits need durable identification unless their purpose is obvious.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Have an electrician repair missing covers, open panel spaces, damaged outlets and exposed wiring. Keep room signs readable and access clear. Do not reach into an open panel or make an improvised repair.

WHAT WE CHECK

Covered boxes, safe wiring, labeled equipment and identifiable service rooms.

Keep fire and smoke contained

Fire doors, walls and ceilings

Let fire doors close and latch

2021 IFC 705.2; 705.2.5; NFPA 80



The closer helps return a fire door to its closed position.

REMOVE WEDGES AND TIES

WHAT THE CODE REQUIRES

Required fire doors must remain operable and close and latch as designed. Wedges, ties and unapproved hold-open devices cannot keep them open. Required inspection and maintenance must be completed.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Remove doorstops. Arrange repair if the door drags, has damaged hardware or fails to latch. Do not disconnect closers or alter the door. An approved automatic-release hold-open is different from a wedge.

WHAT WE CHECK

Doors close, latch and retain their required protective function.

Repair holes in protective walls

2021 IFC 701.2-701.5; 703; 704



Example of an opening needing review; gaps can allow smoke and fire to spread.

USE THE RIGHT FIRESTOP

WHAT THE CODE REQUIRES

Required fire-rated walls, floors and ceilings, and protection around pipes, cables and joints, must remain intact. Repairs must restore the required fire and smoke protection.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Report holes or damage, including openings left after wiring work. Have a qualified contractor use the correct listed repair or firestop system. Ordinary foam or caulk is not automatically acceptable. Ask before removing walls or ceilings.

WHAT WE CHECK

No unprotected openings or damaged required assemblies; uncertain repairs receive further review.

Store supplies safely

Clearance, housekeeping and waste

Leave room below sprinklers

2021 IFC 315.3; 315.3.1-315.3.4; 903



Tall storage needs a layout suited to the sprinkler system; this is not an approval of this arrangement.

18 IN. BELOW SPRINKLERS*

WHAT THE CODE REQUIRES

Generally keep storage at least 18 in below sprinkler deflectors, or 24 in below ceilings without sprinklers. *Some systems need more clearance; limited exceptions exist. Keep stacks stable and aisles clear.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Lower over-height stock. Keep combustibles out of boiler, mechanical and electrical rooms and exit enclosures. Do not use concealed spaces for combustible storage without confirming required protection. Ask before adding racks or changing stored goods.

WHAT WE CHECK

Stable storage, safe locations, clear aisles and the correct overhead clearance.

Remove rubbish and place dumpsters safely

2021 IFC 304.1; 304.3; 315.3



Container size and building conditions determine the required separation.

LARGE DUMPSTERS: 5 FT*

WHAT THE CODE REQUIRES

Do not let combustible rubbish accumulate into a fire hazard. Dumpsters of 1½ cubic yards or more generally must be outside and at least 5 ft from combustible walls, openings and combustible roof eaves. *Approved exceptions can apply.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Remove cardboard, packaging and rubbish regularly. Keep waste away from heat and exits. Check the dumpster location before moving it; smaller containers also have construction and lid requirements. Do not assume a metal dumpster may sit against any building.

WHAT WE CHECK

No hazardous waste buildup and an acceptable container, location and separation.

Help responders reach you

Address, fire lanes, keys and gas meters

Show your address; keep fire lanes open

2021 IFC 503.3-503.6; 505.1



Posted or marked fire lanes must stay clear of parked vehicles and deliveries.

VISIBLE ADDRESS • CLEAR ACCESS

WHAT THE CODE REQUIRES

Address identification must be readable from the road and contrast with its background. The model-code minimum is 4-in-high characters with ½-in strokes; approved local signage may require more. Required fire access and markings must be maintained.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Trim vegetation and replace missing numbers. Keep fire lanes, gates and access roads clear of parking, deliveries, snow and storage. Maintain required signs and striping. Confirm emergency gate access with BFFR.

WHAT WE CHECK

A visible approved address and unobstructed fire apparatus access.

Update keys and protect exposed meters

2021 IFC 506.1-506.2; 312



An approved key box lets firefighters access the building during an emergency.

CHANGED LOCKS? UPDATE KEYS.

WHAT THE CODE REQUIRES

Where BFFR requires a key box, it must be approved, accessible and contain the necessary current keys. Gas meters and piping exposed to vehicle impact need approved protection.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Immediately notify BFFR when locks change and arrange new keys for the box. Keep the box unobstructed. Maintain required bollards or barriers at meters; do not remove them to gain parking space. Confirm protection before changing traffic or parking.

WHAT WE CHECK

Usable keys, accessible key box and required vehicle-impact protection.

Keep firefighting water accessible

Hydrants, outside connections and standpipes

Keep 3 feet clear around hydrants

2021 IFC 507.5.4-507.5.5



Leave room around the hydrant so firefighters can connect hoses and operate it.

3 FT CLEAR ALL THE WAY AROUND

WHAT THE CODE REQUIRES

Maintain at least 3 ft of clear space around hydrants, unless otherwise required or approved. Firefighters must have immediate access.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Remove landscaping, storage and snow from the working area and access path. Do not park in front of a hydrant or hide it behind fencing. Report damage. Private hydrants also need the required inspection, testing and maintenance.

WHAT WE CHECK

Visible, accessible hydrants with clear working space and no damage or obstruction.

Keep connections and hose outlets usable

2021 IFC 901.6; 905; 912.3-912.5



The FDC is where firefighters connect hoses to supply a building’s fire-protection system.

FDC: 36 W × 36 D × 78 H IN.

WHAT THE CODE REQUIRES

Fire department connections (FDCs) and standpipe hose outlets must remain accessible and maintained. The normal FDC working space is 36 in wide, 36 in deep and 78 in high, at the front and sides of wall units or around freestanding units, unless otherwise approved.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Clear stock and landscaping; keep required caps and identification in place. Have damaged connections repaired. Keep standpipe inspection and test reports. Never use these connections for ordinary water service.

WHAT WE CHECK

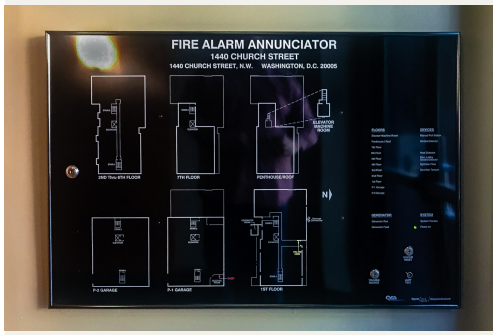
Access, caps, identification, condition and current system records.

Maintain alarms and sprinklers

Equipment that protects people and your business

Keep the fire alarm ready

2021 IFC 509; 901.6; 901.7; 907.8



An annunciator displays fire-alarm information; keep it visible and accessible.

DO NOT IGNORE TROUBLE SIGNALS

WHAT THE CODE REQUIRES

Required alarm systems must be inspected, tested and maintained under the applicable standards. Equipment and rooms must be identified and accessible. A system that is impaired requires prompt action.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Keep pull stations, alarms and panels clear. Have qualified personnel complete required testing and correct defects. Call your alarm company about trouble signals; notify BFFR promptly of an impaired required system. For fire or smoke, call 911.

WHAT WE CHECK

Accessible equipment, proper identification and reports showing required testing and repairs.

Keep sprinkler equipment accessible

2021 IFC 509; 901.6; 903.5; NFPA 25



A riser is the pipe-and-valve assembly serving the sprinkler system.

DO NOT CLOSE OR BLOCK VALVES

WHAT THE CODE REQUIRES

Sprinkler valves, risers and fire-pump rooms must remain accessible and identified. Systems need all inspections and tests required by their standards, not just an annual tag.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Keep working space clear. Do not paint sprinklers, hang objects from them or close valves. Have your sprinkler contractor address leaks, damaged heads or abnormal valve conditions. Keep the full inspection/test schedule and repair reports, including longer-interval tests.

WHAT WE CHECK

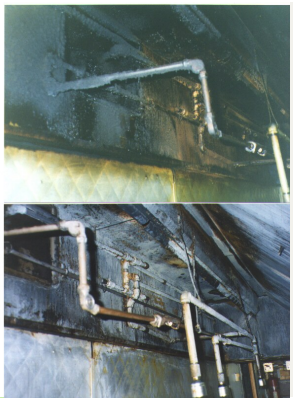
Access, room signs, valve condition, sprinkler condition and complete maintenance records.

Commercial cooking protection

Hood cleaning is different from suppression service

Inspect and clean the hood and duct

2021 IFC 606.2-606.3; Table 606.3.3.1



Actual restaurant hood interior: before cleaning (top) and after cleaning (bottom).

INSPECT • CLEAN • KEEP RECORDS

WHAT THE CODE REQUIRES

Have qualified personnel inspect the exhaust system: solid-fuel cooking monthly; high-volume cooking every 3 months; other cooking every 6 months; low-volume operations every 12 months, unless otherwise approved. Clean when inspection finds grease accumulation.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

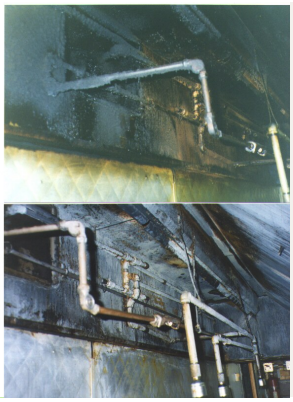
Keep required filters installed and operate exhaust while cooking. Save inspection and cleaning records identifying the company, work and date. Do not assume wiping the visible hood replaces duct and fan cleaning.

WHAT WE CHECK

Filters, grease condition, appropriate inspection frequency and cleaning records.

Service suppression; provide Class K

2021 IFC 904.13.5.2; 906.4; NFPA 10



Actual restaurant hood interior: before cleaning (top) and after cleaning (bottom).

SUPPRESSION SERVICE: 6 MONTHS

WHAT THE CODE REQUIRES

Commercial cooking suppression systems require service at least every 6 months and after activation. Cooking involving oils/fats needs the required Class K extinguisher; maximum travel distance is generally 30 ft.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Use a qualified suppression service company and keep its tag/report. Keep the manual release accessible. Have appliance changes reviewed before moving or adding equipment. Provide a serviced Class K extinguisher where required and teach staff the system’s emergency instructions.

WHAT WE CHECK

Current suppression service, correct appliance protection and required Class K coverage.

Be ready for your visit

A simple service calendar and preparation list

Keep one folder for fire-safety records

Paper or electronic records are fine if you can show them during the visit. Keep service reports, tags, test logs and evidence that problems were repaired. A bill by itself may not describe the work or test results.

Every month	Document extinguisher visual checks. Test emergency lighting for at least 30 seconds.
Every year	Have extinguishers professionally serviced and tagged. Complete the 90-minute battery emergency-light test.
Every 6 months	Have commercial cooking suppression serviced, where installed. Also service after activation.
On the system's schedule	Arrange alarm, sprinkler, standpipe and fire-door inspections/tests. Follow all intervals for the installed system; a yearly visit does not cover every task.
Based on cooking activity	Schedule hood/exhaust inspections using the frequencies on page 11; clean grease accumulation and keep both records.

Before the appointment

• Have an owner, manager or knowledgeable employee available, with access to service rooms.

• Walk the business using pages 1-11. Correct simple issues and arrange professional repairs.

• Update emergency contacts. Identify utility shutoffs and special hazards: chemicals, compressed gas, propane, solar or battery systems.

• Tell employees how to call 911, leave the building and meet outside. Share access codes securely, not on public forms.

Questions before you buy equipment or make a change?
719-495-4300 | Fielding.Lucas@bffire.org

Using this guide

Code references and photo information

Designed for owners and managers

This guide explains the topics covered in BFFR's routine business fire-safety inspection. The code references identify the 2021 International Fire Code (IFC) provisions behind each topic. Requirements depend on your building, business use, approved plans and local amendments; special hazards may require additional review.

If a correction is needed

Your inspection report will identify the condition, applicable requirement and next step. Contact the Division of Fire Marshal if you need help understanding a correction or choosing a compliant repair. Do not wait for the next inspection to report an impaired fire-protection system. Call 911 for fire, smoke or immediate danger.

Where to read more

2021 International Fire Code - International Code Council

2021 IFC corrections - electrical working space and other provisions

NFPA - portable extinguisher placement fact sheet

NFPA - extinguisher inspection and maintenance (Utah archive)

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Scope

Covers all 32 items in the business inspection checklist reviewed for this guide, with related owner preparation advice.

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