

Washington Township Fire Department Standard Operating Procedure

Division 700: Fire Prevention, Life Safety and Education
Section 701: Fire and Life Safety Inspection
Subject 701.01: Fire Inspection Techniques & Procedures
Supersedes :



Approved By:

Date: September 17, 2007 Date Last Reviewed:

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PURPOSE:

Fire inspections are an essential component of the Department's overall fire suppression effort. Therefore, the Department processes and procedures for conducting fire and life safety inspections directed toward identifying and correcting fire and safety hazards. This procedure spells out the fire and life safety process and the inspector's role in implementing the process.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Authorized and properly certified members have the responsibility to provide effective inspection services. Members must know and practice the provisions of this policy.

PROCEDURES:

The Inspector's Image

A fire inspector must project a positive, confident, competent, professional and friendly image. The impression people have of their experiences with the fire inspector directly impact their overall view of the entire Department.

A fire inspector's image is projected generally through sight, hearing and displayed abilities. During the performance of fire inspection duties, the inspector must be neat, well groomed, and adhere to uniform dress codes. When speaking, the fire inspector should project an informed, intelligent, and understandable manner. Verbal communication is vital. The fire inspector must speak well and in a convincing manner. The fire inspector must be informative, educational and positive.

Preparation for the Inspection

Review the file before arrival at the occupancy to assure that contact information is fresh and some recent history is known about the occupancy. If special hazards or processes exist, prepare to ask questions or research the matters before hand. Know what violations or hazards must or should be corrected before leaving a property (e.g., a locked, required second exit).

While not required, courtesy may dictate contacting an occupancy before conducting an inspection. Restaurants should not be inspected immediately prior to or during meal times. Medical offices and facilities may have very strict times for access.

Conducting the Inspection

Upon arrival at the occupancy, promptly contact and introduce yourself to the primary contact (owner, manager, etc.). Keep the number of departmental personnel that accompany the inspector to a minimum to reduce the threat of intimidation. Explain the goal of your activity and request or verify that permission is granted to conduct the inspection. If permission is not granted, clarify the reason(s), leave the premises, and inform a supervisor or the Fire Marshal of the circumstances.

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Ask that a person accompany you throughout the inspection, preferably a person with authority, knowledge and/or ability to access locked or secured areas. Confirm or otherwise collect all necessary data to update/complete the *Inspection History* (Form 51).

Organize the inspection so that all areas and elements of the occupancy are viewed and understood. Start outdoors working to the interior, or vice versa. Start at the lowest level (basement?) working to the highest level (attic/roof?). On each level, work from front to back, side to side, floor to ceiling or what best serves the floor arrangement. View and evaluate all rooms and potential hazard areas including equipment and processes. Observations and comments must be consistent with potential and actual code violations, and issues described on the *Inspector's Check List* (Form 50A). Enter notations about hazards and violations onto the *Inspector's Check List* so they may be discussed when the inspection is complete.

If a Maximum Occupant Load Card is missing or a required Fire Department Permit is not in place, notify the Division of Fire Safety in writing.

Concluding the Inspection

Meet with the person of proper authority to review inspection findings. The person who accompanied the inspector may not be the person in the position to make corrections. Be organized and confident in the presentation of findings, especially those that should be corrected before leaving the premises.

Protect the confidentiality of all information obtained during the inspection process.

Violations Requiring Immediate Correction

The listed below contains the types of violations that require immediate correction. If an inspector discovers a violation or hazard that appears to require immediate correction, but is not on this list, contact a supervisor or the Fire Marshal for further instructions.

- Occupants are unable to leave a building.
 - Required exit locked/inoperable from the egress side. (Remember that not all occupancies are required to have a second exit, and if an occupancy has for example three exits, they may not all be "required" exits.)
 - Means of egress or exit way are substantially blocked or obstructed.
- Major portion or all of a fire protection system is hindered or inoperable.
 - For example, a sprinkler system supply valve is shut off, or all hydrants around a complex are inoperable.
- A hazard exists because flammable liquid storage is too near an ignition source and a fire is imminent.

Violations Allowing Correction at Later Dates

The table below contains the guidelines for the number of days that can be granted for violations not requiring immediate correction.

VIOLATION	DAYS
Cooking hood protection system	immediate – 5
Detector (smoke/heat) malfunction	immediate - 5
Electrical junction box "open"	5-30

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Electrical panel cover removed	5-30
Exit door sticking	5-30
Exit sign not working	5-30
Extension cord misuse	5-30
Fire alarm system malfunction	immediate - 5
Fire extinguisher defect	7-30 (Not mounted, obstructed, hydro inspection needed, etc.)
Fixed local protection system	immediate - 5 (May require shut down if a hazard process is protected)
Flammable liquids	1-7 (Excessive amount above code limits)
Housekeeping/trash accumulation	1-10
Sprinkler system defect	7-14 (Includes missing spare heads, obstructed head, etc.)

Inspection Report

Prepare and deliver an accurate, comprehensive, organized and readable report to the occupancy's primary contact. Enter violations upon a *Basic Fire Inspection Report* (Form 50e) as described in Directive 701.06. Inspectors track their own Follow-up Inspections and the due dates for those to occur. If a fourth visit is required, engine company personnel send a written communication to the Division of Fire Safety. Any subsequent inspections for this occupancy as a result of this scheduled inspection for engine company personnel will come from the Division of Fire Safety.