



Brownsville Fire Marshal's Office  
1036 E. Levee Brownsville, TX  
(956) 548-6075

# Foster Home Fire Inspection Checklist

## Exits/Escapes

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1. A person(s) must be able to travel from any room of the house to an exit that leads directly outside without having to pass through an interior door that can be locked
2. Each sleeping room and living area of the home must have at least one of the following secondary means of escape other than the "front" or "back" door of the home:
  - A. A door, stairway, passage or hall providing unobstructed travel leading directly to the outside of the dwelling
  - B. An outside window with a minimum opening of not less than 5.7 sq. ft. in area, minimum of 20 inches wide, and at least 24 inches high, and no higher than 44 inches above the floor, located within 20 ft. of grade accessible to fire department apparatus
  - C. A non-locking door into an adjoining room that has a means of escape described in A or B above
3. All primary exterior exit doors, windows used as secondary means of escape, and any security bars incorporated with these primary and secondary means of escape, must open from the inside without the use of a key, tool or special knowledge (security code, combination)
4. Closet doors must be equipped where a child can open the door from the inside
5. Bathroom doors must be equipped to where the door can be unlocked from the outside during an emergency
6. All bedrooms and/or living areas above the first floor must be accessed by a standard set of stairs

## Smoke Detectors

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1. Smoke detectors must be installed in each sleeping room
2. Smoke detectors must be installed in the hallways near sleeping rooms

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3. If the house is more than one story, a working smoke detector must be installed on the top of the stairs
4. We encourage you to test smoke detectors, as per manufacture instructions, at least once a month.
5. Replace your smoke detectors every 10 years
6. If needed replace batteries at least once every 6 months, please refer to manufacture instructions

## Extinguisher(s)

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1. There must be a 5-pound dry chemical extinguisher (ABC) available for use in the kitchen and if applicable, in each level of the home.
2. The fire extinguisher(s) must be inspected and tagged by a licensed fire extinguishing company initially and then annually
3. The fire extinguisher(s) must be readily accessible. Do not block it and the pathway to it must be unobstructed.
4. The extinguisher must be no less than 4 inches from the floor from the bottom and from the top of the extinguisher no more than 5 feet from the floor.
5. Familiarize yourself with the use of the fire extinguishers. If needed, please contact our office for more information on the use of fire extinguishers.
6. If extinguisher(s) have been used or low, it must be immediately recharged and inspected by a licensed fire extinguisher company.

## Electrical

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1. Electrical system must be in good condition, if there are issues, a licensed electrician must correct electrical problems
2. No permanent use of extension cords allowed
3. GFCI outlets are required if there is a water source 6 feet or less from the electrical outlet
4. Permanent wiring must be wired in conduit

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5. Defective or improper wiring is not allowed and must be immediately corrected
6. Lighting devices must be properly installed
7. Maintain a 36" clearance around the electrical panel
8. The breakers in the electrical panel must be properly labeled
9. Junction, breaker boxes, light switches and electrical outlets shall have safety covers installed

## Storage and Housekeeping

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1. Combustible and flammable items must be stored away from any stove, heater, or fireplace
2. Lighters and matches must be out of reach of children
3. Flammable liquids must be stored in safety cans and kept away from heat and children
4. There must be an 18" clearance from the ceiling for storage
5. Any holes in walls or missing or damaged ceilings must be repaired
6. There shall be no accumulation of empty boxes, trash, paper, lint, etc.

## Heating Appliances

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1. Gas, wood, or fuel-fired heaters must be vented to the outside (unless listed and approved)
2. Heaters, including wood burning or gas log fireplaces, must be equipped with immovable screen or barrier to prevent contact with open flames or hot surfaces
3. All gas-fired heaters must be inspected annually by a qualified technician
4. Gas appliances (heaters, water heaters, stoves) must be equipped with metal tubing and metal connectors
5. There should be no storage of any item that could burn (boxes, paper, clothing, wood scraps, blanket/pillows, etc.) near stoves, heaters, fireplaces, or other sources of flame or heat, including the gas heater closets or other has fired appliances.

### Miscellaneous

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1. Address must be plainly visible from the street and no less than 4" in height
2. Someone over the age of 18 must be present for the inspection
3. Must have a Home Fire Escape Plan (make sure to practice it often)
4. Must have a working email address in order to send the official fire inspection form. If you do not have a working email address, please advise the inspector for other options that we can make available to you.

#### **NOTE**

*\*These items do not cover ALL possible requirements. These are guidelines only. All local, state and federal codes, ordinances and rules must be followed. Please contact our office for any questions.*