
MEMORANDUM

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Telephone: 864.839.6061
www.blacksburgfire.com

TO: New and Existing Business Owners and Managers

FROM: Blacksburg Volunteer Fire Department Administration

Date: 05/28/2025

SUBJECT: Fire Department Requirements for Commercial Properties

Fire Safety Requirements for New and Existing Businesses

Dear Business Owner/Manager,

The Blacksburg Volunteer Fire Department is committed to protecting life, property, and the environment through effective fire prevention, inspection, and emergency response services. To maintain a safe community, we require all new and existing businesses to comply with the following fire safety regulations and procedures. These requirements are based on the International Fire Code (IFC), National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards, and local ordinances which are regulated and enforced by Blacksburg Fire Department Prevention & Administration along with CC&I Services LLC.

1. Fire Inspections

- **New Businesses:** A fire inspection must be completed prior to occupancy. This includes verification of all fire safety systems and general compliance with fire code.
- **Existing Businesses:** Annual or periodic fire inspections will be conducted. Additional inspections may occur as needed based on risk or complaints.

Common violations to avoid:

- Blocked exits or access ways
 - Expired fire extinguishers
 - Missing or expired inspection tags on fire protection systems
 - Improper storage of combustibles
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2. Fire Protection Systems

- **Fire Alarms and Sprinklers:** Required based on occupancy type and size. Systems must be installed by licensed contractors, tested annually, and maintained in working order.

- **Fire Extinguishers:** At least one 2A:10B:C rated extinguisher for every 75 feet of travel distance. Must be inspected annually by a certified technician and mounted for visibility and accessibility.
 - **Kitchen Hood Systems:** Commercial cooking operations must have a UL 300 compliant suppression system, serviced every 6 months.
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3. Emergency Access, Knox Boxes, and Hydrant Protection

- **Exit Routes:** Minimum of two clearly marked, unobstructed exits. Exit signage and emergency lighting must be illuminated and maintained.
 - **Key Access – Knox Box Required:** All commercial buildings with fire alarm systems or after-hours operations **must** install a **Knox Box** in a visible and accessible location. This box provides secure emergency access for fire personnel without damaging property.
 - **Fire Hydrant Protection:** Fire hydrants located 500ft on or adjacent to the property and must be:
 - Clearly visible and accessible at all times
 - Kept free from obstructions (landscaping, fencing, vehicles, etc.)
 - Protected from vehicle impact with bollards or other approved barriers when located in high-traffic or vulnerable areas
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4. Storage and Housekeeping

- Keep combustible materials at least 18 inches below sprinkler heads.
 - Do not store items in mechanical rooms, electrical rooms, or exit pathways.
 - Store flammable/combustible liquids in approved containers and cabinets.
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5. Hazardous Materials

- Businesses storing or using hazardous materials must report quantities and maintain a Hazardous Materials Inventory Statement (HMIS).
 - Provide Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for all hazardous substances on site.
 - **NFPA 704 Placard Required:** Any facility storing hazardous materials in quantities above threshold limits **must** post an NFPA 704 placard on the exterior of the building, typically near the main entrance or fire department access point. This provides first responders with quick hazard identification for health, flammability, reactivity, and special hazards.
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6. Permits

The following activities require a fire department operational permit:

- Open flames/candles in assembly areas
- Use of pyrotechnics or flame effects
- Temporary structures (tents, stages over certain sizes)
- Storage or use of hazardous materials
- Hot work operations (welding, cutting)
- Confine Space Entry

Visit [Fire Department Website or Office] for a full list and application instructions.

7. Staff Training

- Ensure employees know the location and use of fire extinguishers.
 - Conduct annual fire drills and document them.
 - Assign personnel to assist with evacuation procedures.
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Contact Information

For inspections, permits, or questions, contact the Fire Prevention/Administration Division:



864-839-6061



chief@blacksburgfire.com



www.blacksburgfire.com



104 E. Cherokee St, Blacksburg SC, 29702

We appreciate your cooperation and commitment to safety. A well-prepared business not only protects itself but contributes to the safety of our entire community. If you have questions or need guidance, please reach out to our team.

Sincerely,
Blacksburg Volunteer Fire Department Prevention & Administration