



GENERAL FIRE CODE REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMERCIAL OCCUPANCIES

In order to receive an initial business license, your business must be inspected to ensure compliance with the current fire codes adopted by the City of Guntersville. If fire code violations are found during the initial inspection, a follow-up inspection will be conducted prior to issuance of your business license. Should your business require additional inspections beyond the initial and first follow-up inspection, a fee of twenty-five (\$25.00) will be added to the cost of your business license for each additional inspection. All third or subsequent inspection fees shall be paid when paying for your business license.

The City of Guntersville has adopted the International Fire Code (IFC), 2009 Edition and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 101, Life Safety Code, 2003 Edition. The requirements listed are general in nature and relate to fire and life safety codes adopted by the City of Guntersville. Your occupancy may have additional requirements.

Any questions concerning the above requirements may be directed to Buddy Pettry, Fire Marshal for the City of Guntersville, located at 1745 Blount Avenue, Guntersville, AL 35976 or by calling (256) 571-7577 ext. 3 or by e-mail, buddy.pettry@guntersvillefire.org. All Building Code requirements will be addressed by the Building Code Official located at 341 Gunter Avenue, Guntersville, AL 35976 or by calling (256) 571-7564.

DEFINITIONS:

BOILER / MECHANICAL / ELECTRICAL ROOMS: These are rooms that specifically contain boilers, mechanical (such as central air conditioner exchanges) and electrical panels.

COMBUSTIBLE: Any object that will burn.

EGRESS: A path or corridor leading out of a building.

EMERGENCY LIGHTS: Lights that automatically energize when the power is lost. They consist of a box containing a backup battery, with usually two separate lights connected. Emergency lights are connected to the building's electrical system, either by a power plug inserted into a receptacle or hard wired directly into the electrical system. They are placed above passageways and exits and aid occupants with enough light to exit the building.

EXIT SIGNS: Lighted signs placed over exit doors or in corridors directing occupants the way out of a building. They are required to be on at all times the building is occupied, even when the power is off. Exit light/emergency light combinations are available.

FLAMMABLE: Any substance whether a gas, liquid or solid that is capable of being easily ignited and burns quickly.

FOOT CANDLE: The amount of light produced by one candle for one foot on the floor.

NUMERIC ADDRESS POSTING REQUIRED (IFC Sec. 505.1)

Businesses are required to post their numeric address on the outside of buildings they occupy so the numbers can be seen from the road or highway. A minimum of four (4) inch numbers are required in order to be visible. Rear entrances located on secondary streets are also required to have numbers of the same size posted.

NUMBER OF EXITS REQUIRED (IFC Sec. 1004.3)

Businesses that have less than forty-nine (49) occupants require only one exit. Occupancies where two or more exits exist may require exit signs, depending on building layout. Where exit signs are required, they must be on and clearly visible while the business is occupied. They must also be capable of staying on for ninety (90) minutes after a power failure.

EXIT AND EXIT ENCLOSURES (IFC Sec. 1003)

All corridors leading out of a building (known as egress) must be free of any obstacles, both horizontal and vertical. There are certain other requirements depending on the occupancy type.

EXIT DOORS (IFC Sec. 1008)

All required exit doors must be capable of opening from the egress side (inside) without the use of a key or special knowledge or effort. Exit doors in occupancies with more than forty-nine (49) occupants shall swing in the direction of egress. Delayed opening doors or delayed alarm doors used to prevent theft must be approved by the Fire Marshal, before being used.

EMERGENCY LIGHTING (IFC Sec. 1006)

All businesses shall have emergency lights. Emergency lights energize in case of a power failure during emergency situations. The amount of required emergency lights in a business is dependent on the size and interior layout of the occupancy. Emergency lights are needed to light the way of egress out of a building and are required to function for ninety (90) minutes without power. The amount of required light is one foot candle at floor level.

PORTABLE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS (IFC Sec. 906 & NFPA 10)

All businesses shall have an appropriate number of mounted portable fire extinguishers. Most small business occupancies require only one (1) 10 pound general type (ABC) extinguisher. As a general rule, the walking distance to a portable extinguisher can be no more than seventy-five (75) feet. Other consideration may apply. The specific requirements depend on the type of occupancy and its hazard classification. Portable fire extinguishers shall be serviced annually and tagged by a qualified technician. All paper work from the servicing technician shall be present on site for inspection by the Fire Marshal.

FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS (Code of Ala. 1975, 34-33A-5 & Ordinance 1039 Art. III)

If your occupancy is required to have a fire alarm system or if your occupancy already has a fire alarm system, it shall be properly maintained and serviced as to avoid nuisance alarms. Technicians, who install, repair or maintain fire alarm systems must be permitted by the Alabama State Fire Marshal's Office. To avoid future problems with the acceptability of the service technician or company, check with the Fire Marshal before commencing work. All repair and maintenance records shall be maintained on site for inspection by the Fire Marshal. State law requires all technicians who service fire alarm system to report deficiencies to the Alabama State Fire Marshal's Office.

ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS (IFC Sec. 605)

Electrical service panels must have a clearance of 36 inches deep, 30 inches wide and 78 inches in height. Electric service panels must not have gaps or open spaces between circuit breakers or fuses, blank inserts are required in this case. Electrical service panels are required to have a circuit diagram affixed inside the door of the panel. A circuit diagram shows what circuit or fuse controls a particular electrical system. Electrical junction boxes and receptacles must have proper covers. All exposed wiring must be protected by proper conduit and/or junction boxes. Extension cords must not take the place of permanent wiring and as such shall not be used for more than ninety (90) days. Electric extension cords must be rated to carry the required amperage for the device it is used with. Outside wiring must be rated for outside use. All extension cords must have the UL (Underwriters Laboratory) or other nationally recognized testing laboratory label. Power strips shall also have limited use and shall not be used to replace wall receptacles. Detachable multi-tap adapters (cheater plugs) SHALL NOT be used on extension cords or in receptacles. Detachable plugs that convert three-prong plugs to two-prong plugs SHALL NOT be used. The use of electrical tape on damaged electrical wiring is PROHIBITED. Damaged wiring and cords shall be replaced. Electrical receptacles within three (3) feet of water shall have a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) or the circuit breaker controlling that receptacle shall have a GFCI or an arc fault circuit interrupter (AFCI). State law mandates all electrical work done in a commercial occupancy shall be done by a state licensed electrician.

BOILER / MECHANICAL / ELECTRICAL ROOMS (IFC Sec. 605)

All boiler, mechanical and electrical rooms must have a label affixed to the door stating "BOILER ROOM", "MECHANICAL ROOM" or "ELECTRICAL ROOM". These rooms must be free of combustibile items.

SPRINKLER SYSTEMS (IFC Sec. 901.6 & 903 and Code of Ala. 1975, 34-33-3)

Technicians, who install, repair, or maintain fire sprinkler systems must be permitted by the Alabama State Fire Marshal's Office. To avoid future problems with the acceptability of the service technician or company, check with the Fire Marshal before commencing work. Sprinkler systems shall be inspected by a qualified technician on an annual basis. All repair and maintenance records shall be maintained on site for inspection by the Fire Marshal. State law requires all technicians who service fire sprinkler systems to report deficiencies to the Alabama State Fire Marshal's Office. Sprinkler systems are REQUIRED to be monitored off site, 24 hours a day.

GENERAL HOUSEKEEPING AND SAFETY

Flammable/hazardous materials stored inside must be stored in an approved manner, i.e., flammable storage cabinet. Certain flammable and hazardous materials have an inside storage limit. Check with the Fire Marshal on the limits. Rubbish/waste containers should be removed and emptied daily. "No Smoking" signs shall be placed near all flammable storage areas. Rubbish/waste containers shall not be located where smoking is permitted.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR RESTAURANTS (IFC Sec. 904)

All occupancies that cook food shall have a Type I commercial hood and suppression system over the cooking appliance that meets National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) Code 96 and Underwriters Laboratory (UL) 300. The hood suppression system shall be inspected every six (6) months by a qualified technician. The hood and duct work shall be cleaned from the exhaust down at a minimum of every six (6) months. Depending on the volume of cooking, systems may require more frequent cleaning. Manual pull station activation shall be on a wall in the egress path within thirty (30) feet of the cooking appliance. In addition to the automatic and manual activation of the suppression system, a class "K" mounted portable fire extinguisher is also required in the egress path within thirty (30) feet of the cooking appliance. The class "K" portable fire extinguisher is required to be tagged and inspected by a qualified technician on an annual basis. All records of inspection and cleaning shall be maintained on premises for inspection by the Fire Marshal.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ALTERATIONS OF AN ASSEMBLY (Code of Ala. 1975, 34-2-32)

Any alterations of assemblies (churches, restaurants, or other places classified as an assembly) shall require the services of an architect registered in the State of Alabama.

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