



Short Term Rentals, Owner's Responsibility Guide

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Fire Code Requirements, Maintenance of Short-Term Rentals and Life Safety Systems

Calgary Fire Department Inspections has prepared this reference document listing common fire safety maintenance requirements as found in the National Fire Code – 2023 Alberta Edition and National Building Code – 2023 Alberta Edition (NBC- AE). With some exceptions, these requirements apply to all Short-Term Rentals in the City of Calgary. For a complete list of requirements see the [National Fire Code – 2023 Alberta Edition](#) – also referred to as NFC(AE).

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What is a Short-Term Rental?

Short-Term Rental is the business of providing temporary accommodation for compensation, in a dwelling unit or portion of a dwelling unit for boarders or roomers for periods of a 30 consecutive day limit. There are Two Tiers associated with Short-Term Rentals. Tier 1 is defined as providing accommodations of one to four bedrooms for up to eight occupants. A Tier 2 Short-Term Rental is defined as offering 5 or more bedrooms for rent in a single unit with no overlapping bookings for ten or more occupants. However, there is one consideration for Tier 2 rentals if you are looking to entertain more than five bedrooms at double occupancy a Fire Alarm will be required as per the National Building Code Alberta Edition (NBC(AE)).

Fire Safety Requirements

Who is an Owner?

The *Safety Codes Act* under which NFC(AE) is applied, defines an “owner” to include a lessee, a person in charge, a person who has care and control and a person who holds out that the person has the powers and authority of ownership or who for the time being exercises powers and authority of ownership. Unless otherwise specified, the owner or the owner’s authorized agent shall be responsible for carrying out the provisions of this Code. NFC(AE) Div. C 2.2.1.1.(1)

NOTE: As an example, any unpermitted suites or basements developments will be denied, until approvals are first obtained from the building authority.

General Requirements

There are general requirements that apply to all buildings, such as, maintenance of heating and cooling systems, door hardware and locking features, accumulation of combustible materials, electrical installations and means of egress. To reduce the hazards associated with the accumulation of combustible materials the owner is responsible for regularly checking lint traps and furnace filters, as well as, ensuring there is no buildup of combustible materials near fuel burning appliances. The owner is also responsible to ensure all doors and egress windows function properly and that all exit pathways are in good repair and free of obstructions such as snow and ice.

Weekly	NFC(AE)
Hoods, Ducts and Filters in Ventilation Systems – INSPECT for accumulation of combustible deposits and clean as required	2.6.1.3
Monthly	NFC(AE)
Exit Doors – TEST all doors forming a part of a means of egress to ensure they are operable	2.7.2.1.(1)
Annually	NFC(AE)
Chimney Spark Arrestors – INSPECT, CLEAN and repair burnt-out arrestors	2.6.2.3
Chimneys, Flues and Flue Pipes – INSPECT	2.6.1.4.(1)
Ongoing Requirements	NFC(AE)
Access Panels and Windows – MAINTAIN free of obstruction where provided to facilitate access for firefighting operations	2.5.1.2
Chimneys, Flues and Flue Pipes – MAINTAIN by cleaning to keep them free of dangerous accumulations of combustible deposits; replace or repair as per Sentence 2.6.1.4.(3); MAINTAIN clearances between chimneys, flue pipes, or appliances and combustible construction as per NBC(AE)	2.6.1.4.(2) 2.6.1.5.(1)
Closures in a fire separation (doors, shutters, dampers, etc.) – INSPECT and MAINTAIN so that defects are corrected and closures are operable at all times; repair where damaged to MAINTAIN the integrity of their fire-protection rating	2.2.2.4 2.2.2.2
Combustible Materials – CHECK to ensure materials are not accumulating in any part of an elevator shaft, ventilation shaft, means of egress, service room or service space, or being stored in crawl spaces, ceiling spaces or roofs	2.4.1.1
Door Release Hardware, Latches and Locks – MAINTAIN in good working condition at all times	2.7.2.1.(6)
Electrical Installations – Use and MAINTAIN so as to not constitute an undue fire hazard	2.4.7.1
<i>Means of egress</i> shall be maintained in good repair and free of obstructions.	2.7.1.6.(1)

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Exterior Passageways and Exit Stairs – MAINTAIN free of snow and ice accumulations; MAINTAIN equipment used to melt snow or ice	2.7.1.7
Fire Separations – Repair where damaged to MAINTAIN the integrity of the fire separation.	2.2.1.2
Heating, Ventilating and Air-Conditioning Systems, including appliances, chimneys and flue pipes – Operate and MAINTAIN so as not to create a hazardous condition	2.6.1.6.(1)
Laundry Equipment – CHECK and empty lint traps to prevent lint from accumulating	2.4.1.4
Means of Egress – MAINTAIN in good repair and free of obstructions	2.7.1.6

Maximum Number of Occupants

The *Occupant load* is defined as the number of persons for which a *building* or part thereof is designed. The maximum permissible *occupant load* for any room shall be calculated based on the number of occupants determined in accordance with Table 3.1.17.1. of Division B of the NBC(AE).

In the case of Short-Term Rentals, the number of occupants is based on the number of sleeping rooms at double occupancy (2 persons including children) containing egress windows or protected by sprinklers that are tested annually. For example, if you have a rental property with three bedrooms, all with proper sized egress windows, the occupant load would be six (6) occupants.

Also, the Bylaw specifically requires that all Short-Term rentals post the occupant load card near the main entrance adjacent to the Fire Safety Escape Plan and Short-Term Rental Host Emergency Contact information/Guest Record. **Occupant load cards will be issued upon passing your Fire Inspection.**

Occupant Load	NFC(AE)
The maximum permissible <i>occupant load</i> for any room shall be calculated on the basis of the lesser of a) the number of occupants determined in accordance with Table 3.1.17.1. of Division B of the NBC(AE), b) the <i>occupant load</i> for which <i>means of egress</i> are provided, or c) the <i>occupant load</i> as calculated and posted in accordance with the NBC(AE).	2.7.1.3.(1)
Occupant Load is determined in a dwelling unit based on 2 persons per sleeping room.	NBC(AE) 3.1.17.1.
Signs required by the NBC(AE) to indicate the <i>occupant load</i> for a <i>floor area</i> shall be posted in conspicuous locations near the principal entrances to the <i>floor area</i> . (See Note A-2.7.1.4.(2).)	2.7.1.4.(2)
Where a sign, notice, placard or information is required to be posted, it shall be a) clearly legible, and b) except as provided in Sentence (2), permanently mounted in a conspicuous or prominent location in proximity to the situation to which it refers.	2.1.4.1.(1)
Every sign, notice, placard or information that is required to be posted shall be maintained in conformance with Article 2.1.4.1.	2.1.4.2.(1)

Egress Window Requirements

Except where the suite is sprinklered, each bedroom or combination bedroom **shall have at least one egress sized window or immediate access to an exterior door, which opens from the inside without the use of keys, tools, or special knowledge and without the removal of sashes or hardware**. For more details on window egress requirements please download the [“Advisory Bulletin Egress Window Guidelines”](#) on the City of Calgary website.

Fire Safety Requirements

Egress Window Guidelines (National Building Code(AE))	NBC(AE)
2. The window referred to in Sentence (1)	9.9.10.1.(2).
a. shall provide an unobstructed opening of not less than 0.35 m ² in area with no dimension less than 380 mm, and	9.9.10.1.(2)(a)
b. maintain the required opening during an emergency without the need for additional support (see Appendix A)	9.9.10.1.(2)(b)
3. Where a window required in Sentence (1) opens into a window well, a clearance of not less than 760mm shall be provided in front of the window (see Appendix A).	9.9.10.1.(3).
4. Where the sash of a window referred to in Sentence (3) swings towards the window well, the operation of the sash shall not reduce the clearance in a manner that would restrict escape in an emergency.	9.9.10.1.(4).
5. Where a protective enclosure is installed over the window well referred to in Sentence (3), the enclosure shall be openable from the inside without the use of keys, tools, or special knowledge of the opening mechanism.	9.9.10.1.(5).
6. If the window referred to in Sentence (1) is provided with security bars, the security bars shall be openable from the inside without the use of keys, tools or special knowledge.	9.9.10.1.(6).

Smoke Alarms / Carbon Monoxide Alarms

There must be functioning smoke alarms installed in each dwelling unit in accordance with the NBC(AE). Smoke Alarms shall be installed on each storey including basements, in each sleeping room, and in the hallway between sleeping rooms on or near the ceiling. Where one or more smoke alarms are required, they shall be interconnected so that the activation of one alarm will cause all the alarms in the dwelling unit to sound.

The smoke alarms must be tested monthly and between each new tenant. Carbon monoxide detectors are required to be installed and mechanically fastened in each bedroom or outside each bedroom within 5 m of the bedroom door. See “carbon monoxide detectors” on Calgary.ca Website for more details.

Note: Owners must ensure a written log is maintained, documenting both tests and maintenance such as battery changes for smoke alarms and Carbon Monoxide detectors.

Ongoing Requirements	NFC(AE) / NBC(AE)
<i>Smoke alarms</i> within <i>dwelling units</i> shall be installed between each sleeping area and the remainder of the <i>dwelling unit</i> , and where the sleeping areas are served by hallways, the <i>smoke alarms</i> shall be installed in the hallways.	2.1.3.3.(2)
<i>Smoke alarms</i> shall be installed in conformance with CAN/ULC-S553, “Installation of Smoke Alarms.” (See Note A-2.1.3.3.(3).)	2.1.3.3.(3)
<i>Smoke alarms</i> are permitted to be battery-operated in <i>dwelling units</i> constructed before July 5, 1977. (See Note A-2.1.3.3.(4).)	2.1.3.3.(4)
Fire protection installations shall be maintained in operating condition. (See Note A-6.1.1.2.(1).)	6.1.1.2.(1)
<i>Smoke alarms</i> shall be inspected, tested and maintained in conformance with CAN/ULC-S552, “Inspection, Testing and Maintenance of Smoke Alarms.”	6.7.1.1.(1)
Carbon Monoxide detectors required where fuel burning appliances are installed	NBC(AE) 9.32.3.9

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Carbon monoxide alarms shall be inspected, tested and maintained in conformance with the manufacturer's instructions.	6.7.1.1.(3)
The owner of a leased <i>dwelling unit</i> shall a) ensure <i>smoke alarms</i> within the <i>dwelling unit</i> are tested and cleaned prior to <i>occupancy</i> , and b) provide tenants information concerning ongoing <i>smoke alarm</i> testing and maintenance.	6.7.1.1.(4)

Portable Fire Extinguishers

As Short-Term Rentals are providing accommodation for boarders or roomers NFC(AE) Division B, Subsection 2.11.2.1(1) requires that at least one portable extinguisher having a **2-A rating** shall be installed on each *storey* of a *building* described in Article 2.11.1.1, "Standard for Portable Fire Extinguishers." Section 6.2 further requires that extinguishers be inspected, tested and maintained in conformance with the same standard. Monthly inspections may be completed by the owner or owner representative. However, all maintenance must be completed by qualified personnel with the extinguisher tagged by a service company at least annually.

Installation and Selection of Extinguishers

Fire extinguishers are required to be mounted in a permanent location of the residence at a height between 3-5 feet. These locations shall always be accessible and visible to occupants and be indicated on the Fire Safety Escape Plan. Where questions arise, owners should refer to a qualified person employed by a certified service company or Calgary Fire Inspections via 311.

Inspection, Testing and Maintenance of Extinguishers

Frequency	Requirements
Monthly (see below)	INSPECT extinguisher and sign monthly tag area as per NFPA 10 7.2.2
Annually	INSPECT, TEST and MAINTAIN as per NFPA 10 by qualified personnel acceptable to the AHJ
Every 5 Years	Hydrostatically TEST at 5 years of age as required by NFPA 10 Table 8.3.1
Every 6 Years	REPLACE the extinguishing agent in stored-pressure fire extinguishers as per NFPA 10 7.3.6
Every 12 Years	Hydrostatically TEST at 12 years of age as required by NFPA 10 Table 8.3.1

Monthly Inspection – Extinguisher Checklist

Prior to signing the monthly tag area, inspection shall include a check of at least the following indicators:

1. Extinguisher located in the approved designated place as per the accepted fire safety escape plan.
2. No obstruction to access or visibility
3. Pressure gauge reading or indicator in the operable ("normal") range or position
4. Fullness determined by weighing or hefting
5. Condition of tires, wheels, carriage, hose and nozzle (for wheeled extinguishers)
6. Indicator for non-rechargeable extinguishers using push-to-test pressure indicators

Refer to [Fire Code Interpretation STANDATA 19-FCI-009R1](#) "Portable Fire Extinguishers" for clarification on the intent of NFC(AE) and NFPA 10 for inspection, maintenance, recharging, placement, refurbishing and the applicable listing and labelling (service tags).

Posting of Fire Safety Escape Plans

All Short-Term Rentals require a Fire Safety Escape Plan to be approved and posted in the property, along with the occupant load card. At all times, Plans and Load Cards must be posted near the main entrance of the property.

Fire Safety Requirements

In addition, the Short-Term Rental Host Emergency Contact information shall be available and posted, please consider also providing information such as the closest hospital, location of utility shut offs, flashlights, and first aid kits to assist in an emergency.

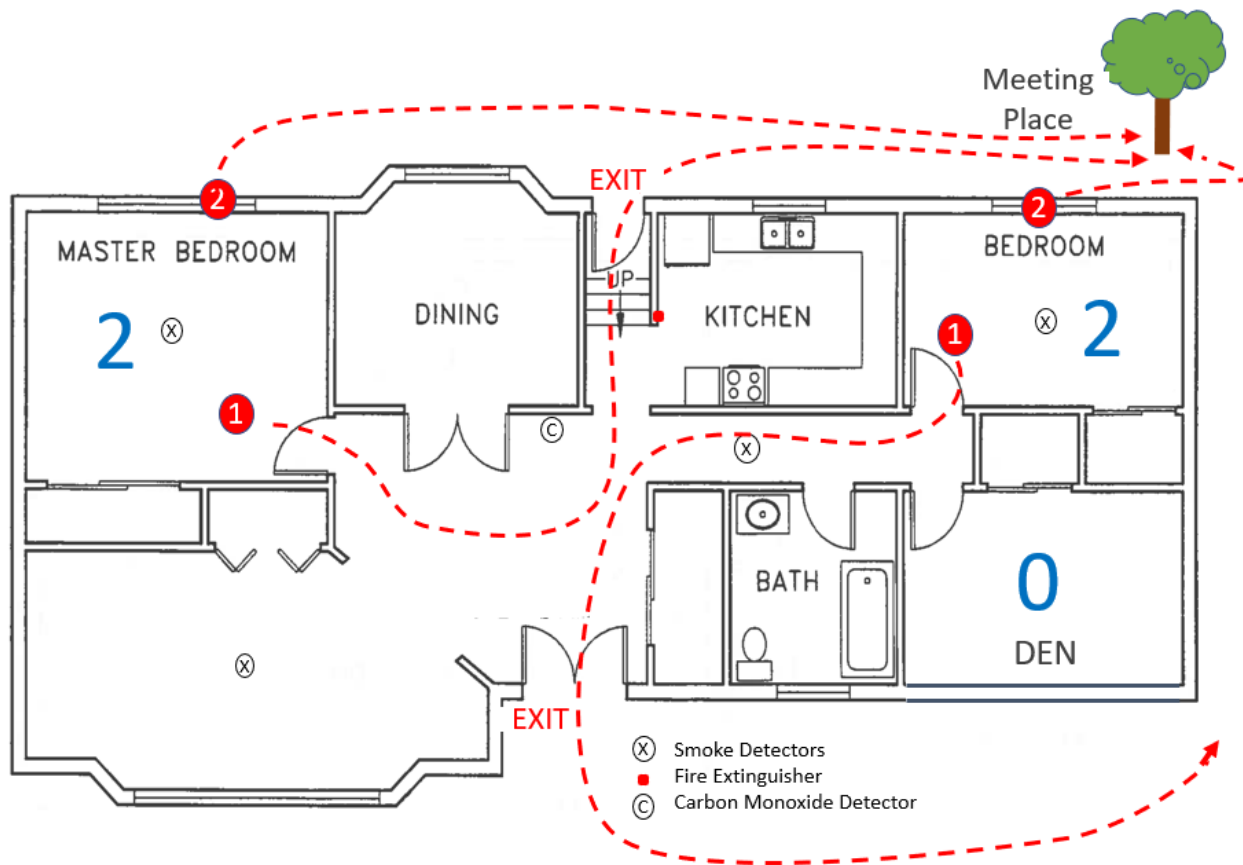


Figure 1 Sample of Fire Safety Escape Plan

Note: The blue numbers represent an example of the occupant load considerations. See the occupant load section for further details.

Fire Safety Escape Plan – Checklist

- Location of egress windows
- Location of Doors
- Location of Smoke Alarms & Carbon Monoxide Detectors
- Location of Fire Extinguishers
- Primary egress path from bedrooms
- Secondary egress path from bedrooms
- Meeting Place
- Legend

Fire Safety Requirements

	CALGARY FIRE DEPARTMENT	
10000 COUNTRY HILLS GV NW CALGARY		
SR Number: FH23-014910	BL Number: 23-014910	
On 1/1/1800 a(n) Short-Term Rental Business Licence Inspection was completed by [Fire Inspector Name here] This location has received Calgary Fire Department's approval for use as a Short-Term Rental. The City Business Licensing Department will be notified of your business' approval. If you have further questions related to your business license or non-emergency fire safety concerns you can contact 3-1-1 and they will be directed to the appropriate department. The Calgary Fire Department thanks you for complying with the safety regulations regarding your Short Term Rental.		
Date of Issue: Nov 27, 2023	MAXIMUM OCCUPANT LOAD	
Signed by: Fire Marshal:	4	
	RESTRICTIONS: Occupant load restricted to 4 based on double occupancy of each bedroom with egress windows	

Figure 2 Sample Occupant Load Card (Issued after passing fire inspection)

Ongoing Requirements	NFC(AE)
At least one copy of the fire emergency procedures (fire safety escape plans) shall be prominently posted on each <i>floor area</i> .	2.8.2.7.(1)
In every hotel and motel bedroom, the fire safety rules for occupants shall be posted showing the locations of <i>exits</i> and the paths of travel to <i>exits</i> .	2.8.2.7.(2)
Where a fire alarm system has been installed with no provisions to transmit a signal to the fire department, a sign shall be posted at each manually actuated signaling box requesting that the fire department be notified and including the telephone number of that department.	2.8.2.7.(3)

Base Building Life Safety Systems - Additional requirements

If your building has a Fire Alarm, Sprinkler System, or located in a High Building please download the [“Building Owners Responsibilities for Fire Safety”](#) Guide for additional requirements. Contact the responsible party for access to these life safety system maintenance documents prior to requesting a fire inspection.

The Inspector will review all annual maintenance documents related to testing and maintenance of these life safety systems. This will ensure the base building fire alarm and sprinkler are functioning properly before providing fire approval for a Short-Term Rental. **Please be prepared for delays in approval if deficiencies are identified with the building’s life safety systems.**

Fire Safety Requirements

Revision History

Major revisions to this document are detailed below. With the exception of the most recent publication all other revisions are considered to be withdrawn. Calgary Fire Department Inspections reserves the right to modify or adjust this document without notice. Refer to [Building and business fire codes \(calgary.ca\)](https://calgary.ca/building-and-business-fire-codes) for the most recent edition of this document.

Publication Date	Details
Amended May 14th, 2024	Prepared for the initial Short-Term Rental roll out.

Short Term Rental – Owner Checklist

- Does the Business owner understand the requirements of this document.
- Does the rental space has approvals/permits.
- Has the owner applied for a short-term rental business license and received approval.
- Has the property been recently renovated and are the permits available.
- Does the property belong to a base building equipped with a fire alarm and or sprinkler system, for example a Highrise apartment. If so, do I have the annual maintenance reports from within the last 12 months.
- Is my Fire Safety Escape Plan approved by business licensing and posted at the principal entrance of the property.
- Is my Fire Extinguisher(s) mounted and tagged by a qualified service company from within the last 12 months.
- Does the business owner believe they meet the requirements of smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors as per the guides direction.