



Howland Township Fire Department

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Business Self-Inspection

Howland is a strong community because of its local businesses, and we want to help you maintain a fire-safe business. Our mission is to save lives and protect property by providing effective fire prevention education, quality inspection, and code enforcement, all while working with our business community to maintain buildings in safe and compliant conditions to prevent fires.

The Fire Department uses the 2011 versions of the Ohio Fire Code and the Ohio Building Code. These codes are maintained by the State of Ohio and are available online, including at our website.

We will do everything possible to help you maintain a fire-safe business. We are willing to help you develop evacuation plans and to assist you in providing employee safety education and programs.

This information is designed to help you prepare for annual fire safety inspections. We encourage you to download the check list to conduct your own inspections on a monthly basis so that you and your business stay safe.

Exterior

1. Emergency vehicles need to access the businesses and fire hydrants without being obstructed by parked vehicles. Help us improve our response time. Remember that emergency vehicles are difficult to maneuver in tight places. Fire lanes are designated to ensure that required access is maintained.



2. Fire hydrants and fire department connections (FDC) are to be clear and accessible. Keep 3 feet of clearance of all vegetation, fences or obstructions around all sides of fire hydrants. You may not paint Public Fire Hydrants.



3. Address numbers for the building and business space are clearly visible from the street. Emergency responders need to be able to find your business in a

hurry. The numbers should be at least 4" in height and ½" stroke width and shall contrast with their background and be visible during the day or night.

4. Dumpsters are located more than 5 feet from combustible walls, roof overhangs, or any other opening, like a door or window. If the dumpster catches fire and it is too close to the building, the fire will likely spread to the building. The same is true for all combustibles that are up against the building.

5. No more than 10 gallons of flammable or combustible liquids are stored in garages or other approved locations, unless they are stored in an approved flammable storage cabinet. No basement storage is allowed unless protected by sprinklers. Consult with the Fire Prevention Bureau before storing flammable liquids.





6. We use the KNOX-BOX Rapid Entry System. Each Knox Box is keyed to a single master key controlled by the department. With this system, we do not have to wait for a property owner to unlock a door in the middle of the night or force open a door to gain entry. This reduces response time, property damage, and liability for lost keys. We use a retention system to maintain control of our master key.



Knox Box®


Interior/general

1. If necessary, portable heaters shall be plugged directly into a wall outlet. Do not use an extension cord for an electric heater...not even a power strip equipped with circuit breaker. Heaters use a large amount of electricity and can melt an extension cord. Heaters must be equipped with tip-over switches and a high-limit temperature switch. If it will not shut off automatically when it is tipped over, replace the heater with one that will.

2. Portable heaters are kept a safe distance away from combustible materials. Electrical heaters will ignite combustibles in a very short time. Keep all materials a minimum of 36" away at all times.

3. Make sure all electrical appliances and the cords supplying power to them are in good, working condition. Frayed power cords and worn or poorly maintained electrical equipment can start a fire.
4. Compressed gas cylinders are secured to keep from falling. If a cylinder falls and the top breaks off, it can become a missile! 
5. The area around the furnace and water heater is clear of combustible materials. Care must be taken to keep this area clear since it tends to be a collection place for all types of storage. They do generate heat and are capable of starting a fire.

Interior/Electrical



1. Extension cords shall not be used in place of permanent wiring, be affixed to structures, or extended through walls, ceilings, or floors. The use of multi-plug adaptors is prohibited. Authorized for *temporary* use are power strips that are either the polarized or grounded types. Power strips must be listed by U.L. or other testing agency. Power strips must be plugged directly into the wall receptacle.
2. Circuit breakers and/or fuses are labeled in the electrical control panel box. If you need to turn off the power to certain parts of your business or pieces of equipment, it is necessary to have the circuit breakers identified. In addition, make sure that there are covers on all electrical switches, outlets, and junction boxes. Missing covers are common safety hazard. 
3. There is a clear area in front of all electrical control panel boxes. A clear and unobstructed means of access with a minimum width of 36" and a minimum height of 78" shall be maintained from the operating face of the electrical control panel to an aisle or corridor.

Interior/Exits

1. Ensure that emergency light fixtures are working properly. If equipped with a test button, push it to check for proper operation. These help light the way

during power failures. You should have a working flashlight handy. Exit signs are illuminated and can be seen from everywhere within your business. Light bulbs in these signs must be replaced when they burn out. This is a good task to assign an employee on a monthly basis.

2. No items are to be stored under exit stairways, unless the area is protected by sprinklers or has a 1-hour fire rating. If the stairway catches fire, you have no means of escape and may be trapped on the floor above.
3. Make sure all exit doors are unlocked during business hours. Exits shall not be locked, chained, latched or rendered unusable from the inside for employees as well as the general public whenever the building is occupied.
4. Maintain a clear aisle or passageway to all exit doors. Building occupants must be able to get to the exit doors quickly and safely. There should be no trip hazards and nothing can be stored in front of an exit.

Interior/Fire Protection Equipment

1. When required, a portable fire extinguisher shall be mounted in the business. Fire extinguishers can be very effective and can prevent a small fire from spreading. It must be mounted, readily accessible, and visible to you when it is needed. Make sure all employees know where they are located and how to use them.
2. Make sure that all fire extinguishers have been inspected within the last 12 months and a tag and seal are in place. There is an annual requirement for the maintenance of fire extinguishers. Check the tags on your extinguishers to see if they are current.
3. Ensure a licensed contractor conducts an inspection of and maintains all special commercial extinguishing systems, such as kitchen hoods, at least every 6 months. Records of these inspections are required to be maintained on site for review during the fire inspection on request.
4. Make sure that the required annual testing of the entire fire alarm system has been completed and recorded by a qualified fire alarm service technician. The records are maintained for review during the fire inspection on request.



5. Sprinkler systems are maintained in accordance with the requirements of the



Fire Code and an annual inspection by a qualified contractor has been performed. Records are maintained for the fire inspection on request.

6. No obstructions, such as partitions, racks, or piled stock, are placed in a way that interferes with the effectiveness of water discharge from sprinkler heads. Minimum clearance required for sprinkler heads shall be 18”.