

**Sam Bass Fire Department**  
**Fire Prevention Division Office**  
**512-255-0100**

[www.sambassfd.com](http://www.sambassfd.com)

**Foster Care / Adoptive Care / Group Home**  
**Fire Safety Evaluation Checklist**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

	Yes	No	Item
1			Are extension cords used in place of permanent wiring?
2			Is a working smoke detector installed in each sleeping room?
3			Is a working smoke detector installed in the hallway near the sleeping rooms?
4			If the house is more than one story is a smoke detector installed on each story (floor)?
5			Does each sleeping room and living area have two unobstructed and operable exits from the home to the exterior? (includes operable windows)
6			Can a person travel from any room of the house to an exit that leads directly outside without having to pass through an interior door than can be locked?
7			Can all primary exterior exit doors, windows used as a secondary means of escape, and any security bars incorporated with these primary and secondary means escape, be opened from the inside without the use of a key, tool or special knowledge (security codes, combination) ?
8			Are the closet doors equipped so that a child can open the door from the inside?
9			If the bathroom door is equipped with a lock, can the door be unlocked from the outside during an emergency?
10			Can all bedrooms and / or living areas above the first floor be accessed by a standard set of stairs?
11			Are all gas, wood, or fuel-fired heaters used in the home vented to the outside?
12			Are heaters, including wood burning or gas log fireplaces, equipped with immovable screens or barriers to prevent contact with open flames or hot surfaces?
13			Are gas appliances (heaters, water heaters, stoves) equipped with metal tubing and connectors?
14			Are all gas-fired heaters inspected annually by a qualified technician?
15			Are combustible items (thing that burn) stored away from any stove, heater, or fireplace?
16			Are all lighters and matches kept out of the reach of children?
17			Are flammable liquids stored in safety cans and kept away from heat and children?
18			Is there an inspected and operable five-pound dry chemical fire extinguisher available for use in the kitchen?
19			Has a Home Fire Escape Plan been written, practiced, and documented?
20			Does the electrical system appear to be in good condition?

Signature of Inspector: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Copy Received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Fire Safety Evaluation Checklist Instructions**

This checklist is provided for the purpose of reviewing fire safety requirements.

Using the checklist as a guide, review the fire safety requirements and answer each item “yes” or “no” with a check mark in the appropriate box. Any “no” checked items must be corrected in order to pass this inspection, except for item No. 1.

Explanation of each item on the checklist:

1. Extension cords are not allowed to be used in place of permanent wiring. They may be used temporarily such as to plug in a power tool, but must be put away after each use.

2. Smoke detectors shall receive power from the building electrical system and batteries. Check the smoke detector monthly for proper operation by pressing the test button or switch on the unit. Do not use a flame or smoke to test the unit. Any non-functional smoke detectors shall be replaced. Batteries shall be changed at least annually. Statistics show about one-third of the smoke detectors installed in homes are inoperative. When detectors are non-operational, the usual reason is dead or missing batteries. The detector(s) should be mounted according to manufacturer’s instructions. The detectors should communicate with each other so that when one goes off all of the others will go off.

3. In addition to providing a smoke detector within each sleeping room, smoke detector(s) shall be located in the hall area(s) in the vicinity of the sleeping rooms. The detector(s) should be mounted according to manufacturer’s instructions. The smoke detectors must be tested in the same manner as described above.

4. In multi-story homes, the smoke detector that covers the upper floor(s) should usually be located at the top of the stairs. The detector(s) should be mounted according to manufacturer’s instructions. The smoke detectors must be tested in the same manner as described above.

5. Every sleeping room and every living and dining area shall be provided with access to a secondary means of escape to the outside of the home in addition to the front or back doors. The purpose of the secondary means of escape is to provide an occupant with an alternate escape route when fire or other emergency blocks the primary exit from the Foster Home.

Three types of secondary means of escape that are permitted:

(A) A door that opens to the outside.

**OR**

(B) The use of an openable window in the sleeping rooms and living areas of the home that provides an opening of not less than 5.7 sq. ft. in area, minimum of 20 inches wide and 24 inches high, and the bottom of the opening no higher than 44 inches above the floor, located within 20 ft. of grade accessible to fire department apparatus.

**OR**

(C) Every sleeping room and living area without a secondary means of escape (as

described in A or B above), has a passage, other than the hallway, to another room that has a means of escape as described in A or B above. The passage must not have any doors that can be locked. An example would be two bedrooms or living areas directly connected with a passage or door. A shared bathroom connecting two living area or sleeping rooms usually will not be acceptable because one or both of the doors could be locked, preventing passage from one room to the other.

**Note:** There are two exceptions to the requirement for secondary means of escape from each bedroom or living area: (1) if the bedroom or living area has a door opening directly to the outside of the building, or (2) where the Foster Home is protected throughout by an approved automatic fire sprinkler system.

6. No Home may have any interior door used in a path of escape that can be locked.

7. Primary exit doors and secondary means of escape, such as windows, and security bars that require a key, opening tool or special knowledge (security code, combination) are prohibited. Several multiple-death fires have occurred when a door lock could not be released because the key could not be found. The prohibition on these types of locks applies only to those doors or windows that are part of the required primary and secondary exits.

8. The requirement for a child being able to open a closet door from the inside is to ensure That the child cannot accidentally become locked inside.

9. Children will often lock themselves in the bathroom. Provisions for unlocking the doors from the outside will facilitate rescue by other occupants or by fire department personnel.

10. An attic room, for example, accessible only by a trap door or folding ladder, would not have an approved primary means of escape. A standard set of stairs to access the room would be required.

11. Unvented heaters are not equipped with vents to the outside of the home. These heaters depend on regular maintenance, proper adjustment, and an adequate air supply for proper combustion. Unvented heaters can release lethal carbon monoxide into the home, deplete the oxygen levels in the home to dangerous limits, or provide an ignition source for a fire. Unvented heaters must bear the mark or label of an approved testing firm and be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and applicable safety codes.

12. It is important to provide safeguards to protect children from the hot surfaces of heating equipment. Children do not always understand the dangers of hot surfaces. Screens (barriers) that prevent children from accessing heating equipment must be of closely spaced wire or expanded metal **and** must be securely attached to parts of the building to prevent movement.

13. All gas appliances must be equipped with metal tubing and connectors, no rubber hoses.

14. All gas-fired heaters, including any central heating unit, should be inspected annually by a qualified person to ensure the unit is in proper working order to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

15. There should be no storage of any item that could burn (boxes, paper, clothing, wood scraps, blankets/pillows) near stoves, heaters, fireplaces, or other sources of flame or heat, including the gas water heater closets or other gas fired appliances.
16. All matches and or lighters must be out of the reach of children. Children playing with matches and/or cigarette lighters cause many deaths and millions of dollars in damage each year.
17. Flammable liquids should be stored in safety cans with the lids shut to prevent vapors from escaping the cans.
18. There should be a five-pound portable fire extinguisher mounted on a wall in the area of the kitchen to extinguish small fires that may develop in or on the stove. The extinguisher needs to have a current inspection tag affixed to it from a license fire extinguisher company. Fire Extinguishers need to be inspected by a licensed fire extinguisher company every year.
19. Home fire escape plans are essential to enable all residents to know what to do when the smoke alarm sounds or other signs of fire are present. Home fire escape plans must rehearsed by all occupants each month to remain effective. The plan should enable all family members to escape using primary or secondary exits. A safe location outside the home should be selected for a gathering point, well away from the dangers of the fire or responding emergency vehicles.
20. Extension cords are to be used on a temporary basis only. When the cords remain plugged in, they become part of the building wiring system. No frayed or spliced appliance cords are permitted because of the danger of a short circuit. All unused openings in the electrical circuit breaker box must be covered to prevent any material from coming in contact with live electrical wires.

#### **NOTE**

**The above requirements set a minimum standard for fire safety in the home. Special situations and circumstances may call for increased fire safety requirements above those detailed above. You may request assistance from the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services foster home developers if you have any questions. The Sam Bass Fire Department Fire Prevention Division Office may be contacted to interpret fire safety requirements.**