



# 10 Most Common IFC Residential Care & Childcare Violations

From Fire Code Inspections Conducted By  
 The State Fire Marshal's Office  
 Data compiled from January 1 through December 31, 2016

1. Door Operation	
<p><b>703.2.3 Door operation.</b> Swinging fire doors shall close from the full-open position and latch automatically. The door closer shall exert enough force to close and latch the door from any partially open position.</p>	
<p><b>Problem</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire doors do not fully close and latch when released.</li> </ul>	<p><b>How to Avoid or Address the Problem</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct periodic door inspections to ensure proper function.</li> <li>• Have staff ensure fire doors are properly functioning during fire drills</li> </ul>

2. Inspection, testing and maintenance	
<p><b>901.6 Inspection, testing and maintenance.</b> Fire detection, alarm, and extinguishing systems, mechanical smoke exhaust systems, and smoke and heat vents shall be maintained in an operative condition at all times, and shall be replaced or repaired where defective.</p>	
<p><b>Problem</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not having the required annual maintenance/inspections conducted on Fire Alarm and Sprinkler systems</li> <li>• Fire Alarm initiating devices (smoke-detectors, pull-stations), and Sprinkler heads not being maintained in an operative condition</li> <li>• Battery-operated smoke alarms not operating when tested</li> </ul>	<p><b>How to Avoid or Address the Problem</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all detection, alarm and extinguishing systems are inspected and serviced annually.</li> <li>• Conduct in-house routine, periodic visual inspections of the systems.</li> <li>• Ensure battery-operated smoke alarms are tested monthly and the batteries are replaced annually.</li> </ul>

## 3. Extension Cords

**605.5 Extension cords.** Extension cords and flexible cords shall not be a substitute for permanent wiring. Extension cords and flexible cords shall not be affixed to structures, extended through walls, ceilings or floors, or under doors or floor coverings, nor shall such cords be subject to environmental damage or physical impact. Extension cords shall be used only with portable appliances.

### Problem

- Improper / unauthorized use of extension cords

### How to Avoid or Address the Problem

- Have housekeeping/care-staff perform routine audits looking for extension cords in resident rooms.
- Ensure extension cords are only used on a temporary basis (i.e. using a vacuum cleaner, floor-waxer)
- Educate residents and resident's family members on the regulations regarding extension cords.

## 4. Fire Drills

**WAC 212-12-044.** In all Group I, Group E, and Group R2 Occupancies licensed by the state, at least twelve planned and unannounced fire drills shall be held every year. Drills shall be conducted quarterly on each shift in Group I and Group R2, Occupancies and monthly in Group E Occupancies to familiarize personnel with signals and emergency action required under varied conditions. A detailed written record of all fire drills shall be maintained and available for inspection at all times. When drills are conducted between 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m., a coded announcement may be used instead of audible alarms. Fire drills shall include the transmission of a fire alarm signal and simulation of emergency conditions. The fire alarm monitoring company shall be notified prior to the activation of the fire alarm system for drill purposes and again at the conclusion of the transmission and restoration of the fire alarm system to normal mode.

### Problem

- Not conducting the required quarterly fire drills for each shift.
- Not properly filling out fire drill reports
- Not activating the alarm during all drills conducted between 6:00 am and 9:00 pm.

### How to Avoid or Address the Problem

- Create a system for sending out reminders to conduct quarterly fire drills.
- Ensure fire drill forms are completely and accurately filled out.
- Activate the Fire Alarm system via a pull-station / integrated smoke detector for all drills done between 6:00 am and 9:00 pm.

## 5. Smoke Detector Sensitivity

**907.8.3 Smoke detector sensitivity.** Smoke detector sensitivity shall be checked within one year after installation and every alternate year thereafter. After the second calibration test, where sensitivity tests indicate that the detector has remained within its *listed* and marked sensitivity range (or 4-percent obscuration light grey smoke, if not marked), the length of time between calibration tests shall be permitted to be extended to not more than 5 years. Where the frequency is extended, records of detector caused nuisance alarms and subsequent trends of these alarms shall be maintained. In zones or areas where nuisance alarms show any increase over the previous year, calibration tests shall be performed.

### Problem

- Not completing required smoke detector sensitivity testing in the required intervals.

### How to Avoid or Address the Problem

- Create a system for sending out reminders to conduct required testing.
- Contact your Fire Alarm contractor to determine when your tests are due and to schedule testing.

## 6. Multiplug Adapters

**605.4 Multiplug adapters.** Multiplug adapters, such as cube adapters, unfused plug strips or any other device not complying with NFPA 70 shall be prohibited.

### Problem

- Using unauthorized Multiplug Adapters.

### How to Avoid or Address the Problem

- Ensure all Multiplug adapters are equipped with over-current reset protection and are UL/ETL listed.
- Have housekeeping/care-staff perform routine audits looking for unauthorized Multiplug adapters in resident rooms.
- Educate residents and resident's family members on what Multiplug adapters are authorized.

## 7. Fire-resistance rated construction

**703.1 Maintenance.** The required *fire-resistance rating* of fire-resistance-rated construction, including, but not limited to, walls, firestops, shaft enclosures, partitions, *smoke barriers*, floors, fire-resistive coatings and sprayed fire-resistant materials applied to structural members and fire-resistant joint systems, shall be maintained.

### Problem

- Unsealed penetrations in fire rated walls/ partitions.
- Penetrations in fire-rated walls / partitions are not sealed appropriately.

### How to Avoid or Address the Problem

- Conduct routine, periodic self-inspections of fire barriers, walls and partitions.
- Create an internal permitting process where any contractors/ installers ensure all penetrations they create are properly sealed before they leave your facility.
- Ensure the materials you use to seal penetrations meet the required fire resistance for the construction being sealed (fire resistance rating in hours)
- Ensure the materials used to seal penetrations are approved for commercial use.

## 8. Opening Protectives

**703.2 Opening protectives.** Opening protectives shall be maintained in an operative condition in accordance with NFPA 80. Where allowed by the *fire code official*, the application of field-applied labels associated with the maintenance of opening protectives shall follow the requirements of the *approved* third-party certification organization accredited for *listing* the opening protective. Fire doors and *smoke barrier* doors shall not be blocked or obstructed, or otherwise made inoperable. Fusible links shall be replaced promptly whenever fused or damaged.

### Problem

- Fire Doors are wedged open to prevent them from closing and latching.
- Fire Doors are not maintained to prevent the passage of smoke/fire (penetrations / too-large of gaps between the door and door-frames).

### How to Avoid or Address the Problem

- Conduct routine, periodic self-inspections of fire doors to ensure proper operation / resistance to smoke and fire.
- Ensure Fire Doors are never blocked open / wedged open to prevent automatic closing.
- Educate staff and residents that fire doors may never be blocked / wedged open to prevent closing.

## 9. Emergency Lighting Equipment

**604.6 Emergency lighting equipment.** Emergency (battery-backup) lighting shall be inspected and tested monthly for not less than 30 seconds (604.6.1) and annually for not less than 90 minutes (604.6.2).

### Problem

- Facility is not conducting the monthly 30 second test of battery backup emergency lighting.
- Facility is not conducting the annual 90 minute test of battery-backup emergency lighting
- Battery lighting does not operate when tested.

### How to Avoid or Address the Problem

- Create a system for sending out reminders to conduct the required testing.
- Replace batteries when testing indicates dim/no lighting.
- Re-test lighting shortly after the annual 90 minute test to ensure battery re-charging is functional.

## 10. Multi-Plug Adapters - Power Supply.

**605.4.2 Power supply.** Relocatable power taps shall be directly connected to a permanently installed receptacle.

### Problem

- Relocatable power taps (Power-strips) are plugged into another power-strip.
- Relocatable power taps (Power-strips) are plugged into an extension cord.

### How to Avoid or Address the Problem

- Ensure all power-strips are plugged directly into a permanently installed wall-outlet.
- Educate staff / residents on proper use of power-strips.