

Fire and Life Safety Inspections

The fire and life safety inspection program was created in 2015 by ordinance of the Township of Hempfield. The goal of the program is to have every commercial building in Hempfield Township be free of fire hazards and to ensure compliance with the Hempfield Township Fire Prevention Code. The Township Code Enforcement Office and our third party inspection service, Commonwealth Enforcement Agency, administers this fire prevention code and life safety code.

WHO WILL CONDUCT THE FIRE INSPECTION?

Commonwealth Enforcement Agency will conduct the inspection of your facility. They may be assisted by members of the Hempfield Township Code Enforcement Office. The contact information for Commonwealth Enforcement Agency is:

Commonwealth Enforcement Agency

1633 State Route 51

Jefferson Hills, PA 15205

1-866-410-4952

WHEN WILL THE FIRE INSPECTOR SHOW UP?

The fire inspector will not announce when he/she is coming, and the frequency of inspection is based on the type of facility. Some facilities are inspected once a year with some being inspected every three years.

WHAT TYPES OF BUILDINGS ARE REQUIRED TO BE INSPECTED?

All commercial properties in Hempfield Township will be inspected on an annual or tri-annual basis. The frequency of the facilities inspection will be determined by its occupancy classification found in the 2009 International Building Code.

The following groups of will be inspected on an annual basis:

1) Assembly Group **A (A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5)**

- A. **A-1** to include but not limited to: motion picture theaters, symphony and concert halls, and theaters.
- B. **A-2** to include but not limited to: banquet halls, night clubs, restaurants, taverns, and bars.
- C. **A-3** to include but not limited to: Amusement arcades, art galleries, bowling alleys, community halls, dance halls, funeral parlors, indoor pools, lecture halls, libraries, museums, places of religious worship, and billiard parlors.
- D. **A-4** to include but not limited to: arenas, skating rinks, swimming pools, and tennis courts.
- E. **A-5** to include but not limited to: amusement park structures, bleachers, grandstands, and stadiums.

2) Educational Group **E**

3) Factory Group **F**

4) High Hazard Group **H (H-1, H-2, H-3, H-4 ,H-5)**

5) Institutional Group **I (I-1,I-2,I-3,I-4)**

- A. **I-1** to include but not limited to: alcohol and drug centers, assisted living facilities, congregate care facilities, convalescent facilities, group homes, halfway houses, and residential board and care facilities.
- B. **I-2** to include but not limited to: child care facilities, detoxification facilities, hospitals, mental hospitals, and nursing homes.
- C. **I-3** to include but not limited to: correctional centers, detention centers, jails, prerelease centers, prisons, and reformatories.
- D. **I-4** to include but not limited to: adult and child daycare facilities.

The following groups will be inspected on a tri-annual basis:

1. Business Group **B**

- A. **B** to include but not limited to: airport traffic control towers, ambulatory health care facilities, animal hospitals, kennels, banks, barber and beauty shops, car washes, civic administration, clinic-outpatient, dry cleaning and laundry pickup and delivery stations, electronic data processing, testing and research laboratories, motor vehicle showrooms, print shops, and professional services.

2. Mercantile Group **M**

- A. **M** to include but not limited to: department stores, drug stores, markets, motor fuel-dispensing facilities, retail or wholesale stores, and sales rooms.

3. Storage Group **S**

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING A FIRE INSPECTION?

As a fire inspector, we want to be viewed as Life Safety Consultants. The intent of the fire inspection is to make your building as safe as possible for patrons and employees. This also includes making it safe if, our firefighters have to enter the building in an emergency.

In a fire inspection, Life Safety Consultants (Fire Inspectors) will walk through the facility looking through all rooms. The walk thru will examine satisfactory life safety conditions on your property such as:

- Condition of exits, operation of exit doors, exit signs, building exit discharge areas, etc.
- Condition of interior finish
- Emergency lighting
- Components of fire-resistive separation
- Maintenance of fire apparatus access roadways
- Maintenance of fire lanes
- Test records for fire safety systems, fire extinguishers
- Presence of an emergency evacuation plan

Recommendations will be made as to how to remedy these situations safer to protect all occupants and reduce liability in the facility. Keep in mind these "recommendations" are actually requirements in the Fire Code of Hempfield Township. The requirements are documented on an inspection report and a copy of the completed report is then provided to the facility representative. The fire inspector will generally allow 30 days for the requirements to be corrected and perform an inspection as follow up.

Should you have any questions or concerns – before, during, or after your fire and life safety inspection, please discuss these with your inspector. Our goal is to assist you in maintaining a safe environment for your patrons and employees.

WILL THE FIRE INSPECTION COST ANYTHING?

The initial cost of the inspection will include an initial inspection and at least one follow up inspection. Many communities charge for these follow up inspections, however Hempfield Township does not. If the requirements cited in the initial fire inspection are not corrected by the first follow up inspection, the inspector will return for a second follow up. All second follow up inspections and further follow up inspections will be charged at the initial rate or fee as stated. These fees will be set by the Hempfield Township Fee Schedule. The fees for fire inspections are as follows:

- Facilities less than 5,000 Gross Floor Area - \$125
- Facilities greater than 5,000 Gross Floor Area - \$250
- Facilities occupied by I-1,I-2,I-3, E, S, F or H-1,H-2,H-3:
 1. 0-50,000 Gross Floor Area - \$500
 2. 50,001-100,000 Gross Floor Area - \$500 + \$1,500
 3. 100,001-200,000 Gross Floor Area - \$500 + \$2,000
 4. 200,000 + Gross Floor Area - \$500 + \$2,500
 5. Fee for additional re-inspection - \$500

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THE REQUIREMENTS ARE NOT CORRECTED?

As mentioned before, there will be an additional cost after the first inspection and re-inspection. If the requirements are not corrected Hempfield Township will seek further administrative enforcement action through the court system. Keep in mind, these are requirements for Hempfield Township and in turn they must be corrected.

WHAT IF THE REQUIREMENTS ARE LIFE THREATENING?

In some circumstances, issues are discovered that are considered immediately dangerous to life or health. If a situation like this is discovered, the facility is required to immediately fix the problem. If the problem is not corrected, Hempfield Township will take additional actions to address the issue.

WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMONLY IDENTIFIED HAZARDS UNCOVERED DURING A FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY INSPECTION AND HOW SHOULD YOU PREPARE?

These include but are not limited to:

- 1) Make sure all pathways, aisles, corridors, entryways, and exit ways are free and clear of all obstructions, debris, or hazards.
- 2) Make sure all EXIT lights and illuminated EXIT strategies are illuminated, operable and visible.
- 3) Make sure all pull stations, horns, strobes, smoke/carbon monoxide detectors, and sprinkler heads are clean of debris, operable, and unobstructed.
- 4) Make sure any hood systems, mechanical systems or suppression systems (including fire extinguishers) are up to date on inspections (current tag), cleaned of debris and operable.
- 5) Make sure all exterior lights fire lanes, exterior emergency pathways including exterior exit doors are unobstructed, operable, and visible.
- 6) Make sure all hazards and fuel sources are properly and safely secured and accounted for. Include MSDS sheets and hazard placards if required.
- 7) Make sure all alarm systems are online, monitored, and operable (if applicable).
- 8) Make sure all exit strategies are posted throughout (if applicable).
- 9) Make sure there are NO open and exposed wiring, junction, or panel boxes.
- 10) Make sure you have an emergency protocol in place, such as emergency phone numbers for key people and utility accounts.