New Westminster Fire & Rescue Services

BUILDING FIRE SAFETY GUIDE

This inspection guide has been compiled by the New Westminster Fire & Rescue Services (NWFRS) Fire Prevention Division to provide a **general** understanding for some of the key fire inspection items for your building and is not an exhaustive list of the requirements. The fire inspection often begins with touring the outside of the property and assessing the compliance of general housekeeping, fire lanes, building address, exits, and fire escapes. The inside portion of your inspection will often begin from the top floor to the bottom floor and includes accessing all service rooms, common storage rooms, and parkade, if applicable.

Address: Address must be legible from 15m and be of contrasting colour with the background.

Annual Service Reports: A copy of the current annual service report for your life safety equipment are to be provided. A service report for the fire alarm, emergency lights/generator, sprinkler system and fire extinguishers are required. A copy must also be placed in your fire safety plan.

Boiler Room: The boiler room is classified as a “service room” and must not contain any storage.

Electrical Room/Panel: The electrical room is classified as a “service room” and must not contain any storage. The door shall be locked.

Elevator: The elevator(s) must be serviced regularly in accordance with Technical Safety BC regulations and the Maintenance Control Program prepared by the elevator maintenance contractor. The maintenance frequency is to be no more than 3 months apart. The service must be documented in a maintenance log that is posted in the elevator room. The operating permit should be readily available for review.

Emergency Lighting: Emergency lights can be provided by a battery pack or generator. Battery powered lights or the generator must be maintained in operating condition, serviced annually by a qualified technician, and have a current inspection tag.

Exit Corridors: No storage is allowed in public corridors or exits.

Exit Signs: Exit signs must be continuously illuminated and clearly visible.

Fire and Exit Doors: Fire and exit doors must not be obstructed, taped, blocked, wedged or altered. All fire doors must open freely and all fire doors must be labelled “FIRE DOOR KEEP CLOSED”. However, a fire door label is not required where the door is

- Located between a public corridor and a suite of Group C (residential) or D (business/office) occupancy,
- Located between a corridor and an adjacent classroom,
- Located between a corridor and an adjacent sleeping room in a hospital or a nursing home, or
- Fitted with an acceptable hold-open device designed to be released by a signal from a fire detector, fire alarm system or sprinkler system.

Fire Alarms and Smoke Alarms: Fire alarm must powered on (green light), with no trouble signals (amber light) and have a current inspection tag. The fire alarm must be serviced annually by a qualified technician. In-suite smoke alarms are to be tested and maintained regularly in accordance with manufacturer specifications.

Fire Department Connection: The fire department connections on the exterior are required to have caps in place and have a 1m clearance.

Fire Extinguishers: Fire extinguishers are to be maintained in operating condition and serviced in accordance with NFPA 10. Each fire extinguisher must mounted in accordance with NFPA 10 and have a current annual service tag attached.

Fire Fighting Vehicle Access: All designated fire fighter access routes must remain free of obstructions.

Fire Safety Plan: The fire safety plan is to be reviewed at intervals no greater than 12 months and reflect any changes to the building. The fire safety plan should include a description and frequency of testing for the building’s fire and life-safety equipment.

Public Safety & Prevention 1 East Sixth Avenue, New Westminster, B.C. V3L 4G6 Tel.: 604-519-1000 Fax: 604-520-7602 Email: fire@newwestcity.ca

Fire Separations: A fire separation is a construction assembly (i.e. wall, floor, ceiling, shaft, etc.) required to act as a barrier against the spread of fire and smoke. Examples include exits stair wells, floor assemblies, shared walls of residential suites, and walls and ceiling of a public corridor, service room, etc. All fire separations are required to be intact and not contain any holes or unfilled annular spaces around penetrations.
Flammable and Combustible Liquid Storage: Storage of flammable and combustible liquid on balconies or adjacent to exits is prohibited. All such liquids must be stored in approved containers.
Garbage/Recycling Room: The garbage/recycling room is to be labelled and remain closed. No combustibles are to be stored outside of the dumpster/bins.
Laundry Room: A common laundry room door in a residential building is to be labelled and remain closed. Lint traps must be cleaned after every use.
Sprinkler System: A sprinkler system is to be serviced annually by a qualified contractor and have a current inspection tag attached to a sprinkler valve. All maintenance and testing is to be in accordance with NFPA 25. All storage is to be 18” below sprinkler heads and extra sprinkler heads are kept in the spare box located in the sprinkler room.
Standpipe and Hose Connections: Interior standpipe connections are required to have 3” of clearance around the hose connection. Caps are required to be in place and accessible. The standpipe is to be maintained in conformance with NFPA 25.
Storage Rooms/Lockers: If lockers are provided, all storage must be kept inside of the lockers with 18” of clearance from the sprinkler heads. Fire separations are to remain intact.

References:
City of New Westminster Fire Bylaw 6940: https://www.newwestcity.ca/media/file/bylaw-no-6940-2004
BC Fire Code 2018: http://www.bccodes.ca/fire-code.html
Elevating Devices Safety Regulation: https://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/13_101_2004