

Large Family Day Care

2025 California Fire Code Appendix Chapter 4 §455 - Large family day-care homes

Purpose. This handout summarizes fire and life-safety provisions for a large family day-care home. The family day-care provider resides in the home, and the use remains subject to California licensing and fire-clearance requirements.

1. Residential Use and Fire Safety Standards

California law treats small and large family day-care homes as residential uses. Large family day-care homes must comply with the State Fire Marshal standards specifically established for family day care, together with the applicable Group R-3 residential provisions.

Code reference: 2025 CFC Appendix Chapter 4 §455; applicable Health and Safety Code provisions

2. Smoke Alarms

Large family day-care homes must have State Fire Marshal-approved and listed single-station residential smoke alarms. The enforcement authority determines the required number and placement based on the dwelling and applicable code provisions.

Code reference: 2025 CFC Appendix Chapter 4 §455.3; CFC §907.2.11.2.2

3. Portable Fire Extinguisher

Large and small family day-care homes must be equipped with a portable fire extinguisher having a minimum rating of 2-A:10-B:C. The extinguisher must remain visible/readily accessible, properly mounted and maintained.

Code reference: 2025 CFC §§455.4 and 906.1 Item 7

4. Manual Fire Alarm Device

Every large family day-care home requires at least one manual fire alarm box/device at a location approved by the enforcing agency. Activation must produce a fire alarm signal audible throughout the facility at a minimum of 15 dB above ambient noise level. The device must be attached to the structure and listed/approved by the Office of the State Fire Marshal. The CFC does not require this device to be connected to a full fire alarm control panel solely by virtue of this family-day-care provision.

Code reference: 2025 CFC §907.2.6.5

5. Exiting

- The home must comply with the exiting provisions applicable to large family day-care homes and Group R-3.
- Stories and basements used for day-care activities require the exit arrangements prescribed by the California Building/Residential Code.
- Required exits must be remotely located where required and must remain readily openable and unobstructed.
- Rooms used for child care above or below the primary level can trigger additional direct-exit or sprinkler provisions.

Code reference: 2025 CFC §455.8; 2025 CBC/CRC applicable family day-care egress provisions

6. Special Hazards

An unenclosed gas-fired water heater or furnace located within an area used for child care must be protected so children cannot contact the appliance. This specific protective provision does not apply to kitchen stoves or ovens, although cooking appliances remain subject to ordinary safety requirements.

Code reference: 2025 CFC §455.7

7. General Inspection Items

- Address is visible from the street.
- Smoke alarms are installed, listed and operational.
- Manual alarm device is mounted, listed and audible throughout.

- 2-A:10-B:C extinguisher is installed and accessible.
- Required exits and paths are clear and openable.
- Electrical hazards and damaged cords/receptacles are corrected.
- Heating equipment and other hazards are protected from children.
- Combustible storage is controlled and kept away from ignition sources.
- Any required sprinkler system is operational and maintained.
- Changes to rooms used for day care are reviewed before use.

Primary References

- 2025 California Fire Code Appendix Chapter 4 §455 - Large Family Day-Care Homes
- 2025 California Fire Code §§906.1 and 907.2.6.5 / 907.2.11.2.2
- 2025 California Building Code / California Residential Code family day-care and egress provisions
- California Code of Regulations, Title 19, and applicable California Health and Safety Code licensing provisions

This handout is an informational summary. It does not replace the adopted code, approved plans, permit conditions, State licensing requirements, or determinations of the fire code official. Project-specific requirements may vary.