

Fire & Life Safety Business Inspection

2025 California Fire Code - General business inspection guide

Purpose. This checklist identifies common fire and life-safety conditions reviewed during a routine business inspection. It is not occupancy-specific; additional requirements apply to restaurants, schools, care facilities, hazardous-material users, assembly occupancies, high-piled storage and other special uses.

1. Addressing and Fire Department Access

- Approved address identification is visible and legible from the street or fire department approach.
- Fire apparatus access roads, drive aisles and fire lanes are unobstructed and maintained.
- Required gates and emergency access features are operational.
- Fire department connections, hydrants and key boxes are visible, accessible and not blocked by parking, storage or landscaping.

Code reference: 2025 CFC §§503, 505, 506, 507 and 912

2. Exits and Means of Egress

- Exit doors and required egress paths are free of storage, furniture and other obstructions.
- Required exit doors can be opened from the egress side without prohibited keys, tools or special knowledge.
- Exit signs are illuminated and visible where required.
- Emergency lighting operates where required.
- Aisles, corridors and stairways maintain required clear width.
- Doors, panic hardware and fire-resistance-rated opening protectives are maintained in working condition.

Code reference: 2025 CFC Chapter 10

3. Portable Fire Extinguishers

- Extinguishers are provided for the occupancy and hazards present.
- Units are readily accessible, visible and properly mounted.
- Travel distance and distribution comply with the applicable hazard classification.
- Inspection/service tags are current and units show no obvious damage, discharge or obstruction.
- Class K extinguishers are provided where required for commercial cooking operations.

Code reference: 2025 CFC §906; CCR Title 19, Division 1, Chapter 3

4. Sprinkler, Alarm and Fire Protection Systems

- Sprinkler control valves are open, supervised where required, identified and accessible.
- Sprinkler heads are not painted, damaged or obstructed by storage/fixtures.
- Fire alarm panels, pull stations, notification appliances and detectors are unobstructed and maintained.
- Inspection/testing/maintenance records are available as required.
- Impaired systems are managed under the CFC impairment and fire-watch provisions.
- FDCs and fire protection equipment rooms are identified and accessible.

Code reference: 2025 CFC Chapter 9; CCR Title 19, Division 1, Chapter 5

5. Electrical and Ignition Hazards

- No damaged flexible cords, exposed conductors, open junction boxes or missing electrical covers.
- Extension cords are not used as permanent wiring and are not run through doors, walls or ceilings in a manner prohibited by the code.
- Relocatable power taps and multi-plug adapters are listed and used within their listing.
- Electrical equipment working space is kept clear of storage.
- Portable heaters and heat-producing appliances are listed, stable and separated from combustibles as required.

Code reference: 2025 CFC Chapter 6; California Electrical Code

6. Storage and Housekeeping

- Combustible waste and rubbish are removed regularly.
- Storage does not block exits, electrical equipment, fire extinguishers or fire protection system components.

- Combustible storage is controlled in boiler, mechanical and electrical rooms.
- High-piled combustible storage is not created without required review and fire protection.
- Flammable/combustible liquids, compressed gases and hazardous materials are stored, labeled and separated in accordance with the applicable chapters.

Code reference: 2025 CFC Chapters 3, 32 and 50-67

7. Commercial Cooking and Special Hazards

- Commercial hood and suppression systems are maintained and serviced at required intervals.
- Grease filters, hoods and ducts are kept clean enough to prevent excessive grease accumulation.
- Cooking appliances remain in the approved arrangement under the hood.
- Fuel shutoffs, manual activation devices and Class K extinguishers remain accessible.
- Special processes, hot work, open flames or hazardous materials are conducted only with required controls and permits.

Code reference: 2025 CFC §§606, 904, 906; applicable CMC/NFPA standards

8. Records and Corrective Action

Inspection findings should identify the code section, location and corrective action needed. Conditions creating an immediate life-safety hazard may require immediate correction, cessation of the hazardous activity or other action by the fire code official. Reinspection may be required to verify compliance.

Primary References

- 2025 California Fire Code, Chapters 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 32 and 50-67
- California Code of Regulations, Title 19, Division 1
- California Electrical Code and California Mechanical Code, as applicable
- NFPA standards referenced by the adopted California codes for specific fire-protection systems

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.