# City of Merced Fire Department Fire Safety Self Inspection Guidelines

# GENERAL

Providing an easily identifiable address assists fire, police or ambulance personnel locate your business in an emergency. Address numbers are required to be Arabic numerals or alphabet letters at least 4 inches in height and ½ inch wide. The color of the address numbers should contrast with the building. For example, black numbers on a white or light colored building. The address should face the street or road fronting the property.



# **KNOX BOX**

Having current keys in the Knox box enables Fire personnel to rapidly gain access without damaging doors, locks or other parts of your building.



NOTE: Not all businesses are required to have a Knox Box

# **DXITS**

Ensuring that exits are clear, accessible and easy to open is critical for the safety of you, your employees and the public in the time of a fire, earthquake or other emergency.

03 Be sure that all storage, furniture, displays and other items do not obstruct exit ways, corridors or doors. The exit is required to get you from any point in a building to a public way.



Example of Blocked Exit Corridor

04 Slide bars, hasps, chains or other bolt locks are not permitted on any doors. The use of security grills is allowed for limited occupancies (business, factory, mercantile and storage) and only on the main exit. A Knox Box is required for locations with security grills.









Illegal Padlock/Hasp Door with Illegal Locks

05 Employees and the public must be able to exit the building without the use of a key or tight grasping, tight pinching or twisting the wrist to operate the door hardware or lock.







Thumb latches are not allowed unless they open in conjunction with the knob or handle operation (single action/motion)

16 If a door is equipped with hardware or lock that can require a key to open from the inside to exit there must be sign stating "This Door To Remain Unlocked When Building Is Occupied" posted above or adjacent to the door. This type of lock or latch is permitted in limited occupancies and only on the main door.





# THIS DOOR TO REMAIN UNLOCKED WHEN BUILDING IS OCCUPIED

If key operated hardware as shown above is used, any of the signs listed above can be used. Remember this is only allowed on the main door.

Lighted exit signs must be operational at all times. Replace bulbs as needed.



Illuminated Exit Signs

Emergency exit lights must be ready to operate at all times. The lights should be tested at least monthly to ensure that they work. Pushing the test button on the lighting fixture itself can perform the test.



**Emergency Exit Lights** 

# **STRUCTURE**

To prevent the spread of fire or smoke into the attic, walls or other parts of the building it is important to be sure that all openings in the walls, floors and ceiling are properly repaired/patched. All ceiling tiles should also be in place.

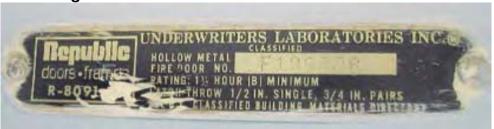




**Ceiling Tiles Missing** 

Opening in a Wall

Fire rated doors are normally located in exit corridors or used to separate storage, electrical or equipment rooms from the rest of the building. The UL Label can identify these doors. Fire rated doors cannot be blocked open and must be self-closing and latching.



Example of Fire Door Label

# HOUSEKEEPING

All weeds and other combustible debris must be removed from the property.



Dry Weeds Must Be Cut and Removed

- 12 Storage of merchandise must be orderly and comply with the following requirements:
  - a. To deter the spread of fire and allow water to reach the top of storage, a minimum clear space of 24 inches must be maintained between the top of storage and the ceiling.





Examples Of Improper Storage

b. To provide exit access the distance between storage aisles in areas used by the public must be 44 inches. The distance from storage and a wall must be at least 36 inches. In storage areas not accessed by the public, aisles must be at least 24 inches in width.







Examples of Properly Unobstructed Exit Aisles

c. Storage is not allowed in attics, under floors or other concealed spaces unless the storage area is one-hour fire rated and equipped with an approved fire door or assembly.





Examples of Illegal Storage in Non-Rated Attic Space

To separate fuel from possible sources of ignition, storage is not permitted in electrical, boiler or mechanical rooms.





Examples of Electrical/Mechanical Rooms with Unapproved Storage

# **ELECTRICAL**

Illegal or improperly used extension cords are documented as a significant fire cause. Only approved UL 1363 Listed power taps are permitted for use with small portable equipment such as computers, radios, fans, etc. Approved cords cannot be "piggybacked". Each cord must plug into an approved outlet. Large appliances such as refrigerators, washers or dryers should be plugged directly into an approved outlet.

14 Remove all non-UL listed extension cords or zip cords.



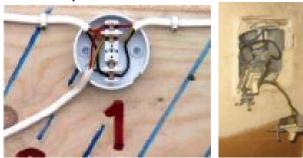
Example of Illegal Multi-Plug Extension Cord

15 Extension cords cannot be use as fixed wiring or be extended through walls, ceilings or floors, under doors or floor coverings or be exposed to environmental damage or physical impact.



Example of Illegal Cords - Subject to Physical Damage

16 Covers are required to be in place on all electrical boxes, outlets, switches, etc.



Example of Illegal Open Electrical Box and Outlet

17 Exposed or frayed wiring and open splices are not permitted.



Example of Frayed/Open Electrical Wires

A clear space of not less than 30 inches in width, 36 inches in depth and 78 inches in height shall be provided in front of electrical service equipment.



Posting/Marking Area in Front of Electrical Panels is Recommended

19 Electrical rooms shall be labeled "Electrical Room". The disconnecting means for electrical panels and individual circuit breakers must be labeled for identification.





Label Electrical Rooms and Circuit Breakers - Example

20 Circuit breakers must operate freely and not be taped or otherwise impaired to prevent their designed operation. No open areas are permitted.



Breakers are <u>Not</u> to be Taped, All Open Spaces <u>Must</u> be Filled with a Blank

# FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

The business owner, manager or designee must visually inspect all fire extinguishers monthly to ensure the seal is in place, the gauge reads in the green and the service tag is current. This inspection is to be documented by initialing the back of the service tag. Fire extinguishers are required to be inspected at least once per year by a State Fire Marshal licensed company and have a current State Fire Marshal service tag attached. Fire extinguishers must also be serviced anytime they are used or the seal on the safety pin is broken.



Service Tag Day/Month/Year



Rear of Tag to Document Monthly Inspection



Pressure Gauge in Green/Seal in Place

Fire extinguishers must be mounted off the floor; distance to the top of the extinguisher should not exceed 5 feet.



Properly Mounted/Accessible



Access Obstructed

We hope the information provided in this website has been helpful in completing your Fire Safety Self Inspection Checklist. Should you have any questions or require additional clarification/information please contact our office:

City of Merced Fire Prevention Bureau 99 E. 16<sup>th</sup> Street Merced, CA 95340 (209) 385-6830 (Bus) (209) 385-6870 (Fax)

NOTE: If you would prefer to have your business inspected by fire department personnel please contact our office as soon as possible to schedule an appointment.