

# Orange County Fire Authority

## Community Risk Reduction

1 Fire Authority Road, Building A, Irvine, CA. 92602 [www.ocfa.org](http://www.ocfa.org) 714-573-6100

# Residential Large Family Daycare Facilities



## Guideline F-01

Serving the Cities of Aliso Viejo • Buena Park • Cypress • Dana Point • Garden Grove • Irvine • Laguna Hills • Laguna Niguel • Laguna Woods  
Lake Forest • La Palma • Los Alamitos • Mission Viejo • Rancho Santa Margarita • San Clemente • San Juan Capistrano • Seal Beach  
Santa Ana • Stanton • Tustin • Villa Park • Westminster • Yorba Linda • and Unincorporated Areas of Orange County

# Residential Large Family Daycare Facilities

## 1. PURPOSE

The following guideline is intended to ensure compliance with the appropriate requirements for residential large family daycare facilities. Regulations regarding residential daycare facilities can be found in the California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 19, 2025 California Fire Code (CFC), 2025 California Building Code (CBC), 2025 California Residential Code (CRC), and the California Health and Safety Code (H&SC).

## 2. SCOPE

This guideline applies to licensed facilities **classified as large family daycare by the Department of Social Services**. These facilities may house up to 14 children for less than 24 hours and are located in an R-3 (single family residence) or R-2 (multifamily residential building) occupancy. This guideline applies only to facilities located within the jurisdiction of the Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA); see Attachment 1.

*This document does not include all regulations that may apply to homes used for large family daycare—it is only intended to provide guidance on issues and questions commonly encountered during fire clearance inspections.*

## 3. SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Department of Social Services (DSS) Form STD 850, along with a site and floor plan, must be forwarded to OCFA (via email to [850@ocfa.org](mailto:850@ocfa.org)) from DSS prior to scheduling the fire clearance inspection. Documents must be submitted at least two weeks before the scheduled fire clearance inspection date. Upon completion of the inspection, the 850 form will be completed and returned to DSS by OCFA. Please be aware that a fee will be charged for the fire clearance inspection, and additional fees will be accrued if more than one reinspection is necessary. Please review this guideline thoroughly and complete Attachment 5 prior to your inspection to facilitate fire clearance sign-off by OCFA.

The fire clearance inspection request cannot be processed and the 850 form cannot be completed by OCFA if the required information is not submitted on time or if the plans are incomplete. Please contact your local OCFA PFS office (see Attachment 1) with any questions.

The plans must include the information listed below:

**3.1 Building Address:** Street name and number, city, zip code

**3.2 Occupancy Classification:** R-3, if located in a detached single-family home or duplex; R-if located in a multifamily residential building (apartment, condos)

**3.3 Site Plan:** Illustrating the following:

- 3.3.1** Outline of the home and any other structures on the property (detached garages, sheds, etc.)
- 3.3.2** Exit pathways from the home to the street—note the width of the pathway at its narrowest point
- 3.3.3** Fences and walls over 3 feet tall
- 3.3.4** Gates—note the clear opening width

**3.4 Floor Plan:** Illustrating the following:

- 3.4.1** All rooms in the home—label each room with its function (bedroom, kitchen, bathroom, etc.) and clearly identify which spaces are proposed for daycare use and, of those spaces, which will be used for napping
- 3.4.2** Attached garages—show doors, windows, or other openings between the garage and the rest of the home
- 3.4.3** Interior and exterior doors—note the clear height/width of each door
- 3.4.4** The location of all smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors—note whether they are existing devices or newly added
- 3.4.5** The manual fire alarm pull-station location (see Attachment 3)

**3.5 Sprinkler System:** Note if the home is equipped with a fire sprinkler system. A fire sprinkler system is required if any space used for daycare purposes is located above the first story.

- 3.5.1** Ensure that no sprinkler heads have been painted over or have paint splatter on them. Sprinkler heads must be in an original good functioning state.

Please be aware that fire clearance from OCFA does not constitute approval from other agencies that may have jurisdiction over this facility. Please contact your local building or planning department regarding their zoning, construction, and permit requirements.

## **4. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

Large family daycare facilities shall comply with the requirements listed below:

**4.1 Smoke Alarms/Detectors:** Smoke alarms are required in all dwellings used for large family daycare purposes. Smoke alarm devices shall be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's published guidelines/instructions. See Attachment 4 for smoke alarm locations.

Where more than one new smoke alarm is installed, all installed devices must be interconnected to each other physically (hard wired) or wirelessly. When one activates, all of the devices will also sound an audible alarm simultaneously. Newly installed smoke alarms are recommended, but not required, to be interconnected with existing devices. When activated, smoke alarms shall be clearly audible in all sleeping rooms with all intervening doors closed.

Smoke alarms shall be UL listed, California State Fire Marshal approved, and tested and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Smoke alarms that no longer function and/or are older than ten years shall be replaced. Replace the device if a manufacturer's date cannot be found. The manufacture date can be found on the backside of all smoke alarms. (*CBC 907.2.11*).

**4.2 Carbon Monoxide Detectors/Alarms:** Carbon monoxide (CO) detection is required in dwellings with gas or wood-burning fireplaces, or gas or fuel-oil forced air furnaces, or in homes with an attached garage where there is a door, duct, or other openings between the garage and the rest of the home. See Attachment 4 for CO device locations.

CO devices shall be hardwired to the home's electrical system and shall have battery backup. All CO devices shall be interconnected, either physically or wirelessly, so that if one activates, they all sound an alarm.

**Exception:** Carbon monoxide alarms are permitted to be solely battery operated where the code that was in effect at the time of construction did not require carbon monoxide detectors to be provided.

Install CO devices in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. CO devices shall be UL listed and State Fire Marshal approved. CO devices shall be replaced every 7 years. Combination smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are permissible. Electrical work shall be approved by the local building department. (*CFC 915*).

**4.3 Fire Alarm:** Every large family daycare facility shall be provided with a fire alarm that consists of at least one manual initiating device connected to a bell, horn, or other notification device. The initiating device and the notification device shall be listed by the California State Fire Marshal for use in a residential or commercial fire alarm system or as a component of a combination residential fire/burglar alarm system. The initiating device shall be placed between 42 and 48 inches off the floor at an approved location in the home and, upon activation, shall cause the notification device to sound an alarm signal that is loud enough to be clearly heard throughout the home above all background noise. The initiating and notification devices for the fire alarm must be securely attached to the structure. They can be a standalone system and not required to be interconnected to any other alarm or detection device in the home (e.g., smoke alarms, CO detectors) unless those devices are being used to sound the alarm signal for the fire alarm (such as in a combination fire/burglar alarm system). The fire alarm does not need to be provided with back-up power. See Attachment 3 (*CBC 907.2.6.5*).

**4.4 Exiting:** There shall be a minimum of two approved exits from the dwelling that are remotely located from each other. Exit doors shall be at least 6 feet 8 inches in height with at least 32-inches of clearance when opened at a 90-degree angle. A sliding door may be used as one of the two required exits as long as it meets the 32-inch unobstructed opening width (*CBC 1006.2.2.7*).

These required exit doors and any gates along the path of exit travel shall be equipped with hardware that does not require any special effort or knowledge or require the use of a key or other tool, to operate. If a second lock such as a deadbolt is installed on a door, both the primary door knob lock and the deadbolt lock shall release in tandem and allow the door to open freely when the door knob is turned; no other locks or latches, such as a clasp and padlock, security chain, deadbolts or surface-mounted slide bolt, are permitted (CBC 1010.2).

*Example of single action door hardware, where one turn of the door handle releases the “deadbolt” all in one motion.*



In addition to the requirements above, the following apply:

- 4.4.1** Exit paths to the public way shall be maintained clear with no furniture, equipment, storage, or other obstructions that could hinder immediate use (CFC 1003.6).
- 4.4.2** Basements used for daycare purposes shall be provided with two approved exits that are remotely located from each other, one of which must provide access directly to the exterior (CBC 1006.2.2.7).
- 4.4.3** Daycare use is not allowed on stories above the first floor unless the home is protected by a fire sprinkler system. Stories above the first used for daycare purposes shall have two exits that are remotely located from each other, one of which must provide access directly to the exterior (CBC 1006.2.2.7).
- 4.4.4.** Homes located entirely above the first floor that are used for daycare, as may be the case in apartment buildings, shall meet the requirements of CBC 436.1, CBC 455.6, and CBC 1006.2.2.7.
- 4.4.5** Emergency escape and rescue openings shall be maintained free of any obstructions other than those noted below and shall be operational from the inside of the room without the use of keys, tools or special knowledge.

**4.4.6** Bars, grilles, covers, screens or similar devices are permitted to be placed over emergency escape and rescue openings provided the minimum net clear opening size is not compromised and such devices shall be releasable or removable from the inside without the use of a key, tool, special knowledge, or force greater than that which is required for normal operation of the emergency escape and rescue opening. *The release mechanism shall be maintained operable at all times. Such bars, grills, grates or any similar devices shall be equipped with an approved exterior release device for use by the fire department (CFC 1031.1).*

## **4.5 Other Requirements**

**4.5.1** Provide a minimum of 4-inch address numbers that contrast with their background. Address numbers are required to be attached to the structure and visible from the street (CFC 505.1).

**4.5.2** Provide a fire extinguisher with a minimum classification/rating of 2A:10B:C. The extinguisher is required to be securely attached to a wall in a visible and readily accessible location with the top of the extinguisher mounted no more than 5 feet above finished floor level, with the bottom at least 4 inches above the floor, in a conspicuous and unobstructed location. The extinguisher is required to be inspected annually and be fully serviced every six years by a licensed fire protection company. A current annual service tag is required to be attached to the fire extinguisher or, if the extinguisher was purchased within the last year, proof of purchase date is required (it's recommended to tape the receipt to the fire extinguisher).

Please review the manufacturer's guidelines for additional requirements and instructions on how to use the extinguisher (CBC 906.1, 906.9).

**4.5.3** Fireplaces and gas-fired water heaters and furnaces in areas used for daycare shall be protected in such a way to prevent children from making contact with these appliances (CBC 455.7).

**4.5.4** Maintain combustible free storage clearance around water heaters as per manufacturer's specifications (CFC 305.1).

**4.5.5** All fire and smoke rated construction separating the garage and the dwelling must be maintained in good condition with no holes in the wall or other open penetrations (CFC 703.1).

**4.5.6** If the garage is attached to the dwelling unit, doors between the dwelling and the garage shall be equipped with a self-closing device and be positive latching. The door shall be either solid wood or a solid honeycomb-core steel door that is a minimum of 1-3/8 inches thick; a 20-minute rated door equipped with a smoke (rubber) gasket around the inside of the door frame creating a seal. There should be no "doggy doors" or "cat doors" from the

garage leading directly into the house. There shall be no openings from the garage into any of the sleeping areas (*CBC 406.3.2.1*).

- 4.5.7** The garage shall not be used as living quarters and/or daycare unless this conversion has been approved by the local building department. Proof of approval will be required at time of inspection (*CBC 105.1*).
- 4.5.8** All modifications to the structure, including electrical or mechanical systems, must be reviewed, inspected, and approved by the local building department prior to scheduling a fire clearance inspection with OCFA. Proof of approval may be required at the time of inspection (*CBC 105.1*).

# ATTACHMENT 1

## OCFA Prevention Field Services Contact Information

**West/North Orange County**  
**(714) 527-9475**

**Cities of:**

Buena Park	Cypress
La Palma	Los Alamitos
Seal Beach	Stanton
Westminster	Yorba Linda

**...and unincorporated areas of west and north Orange County** including the communities of Midway City and Rossmoor

**Central Orange County**  
**(714) 573-6184**

**Cities of:**

Irvine	Tustin	Villa Park
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**...and adjacent unincorporated areas of central Orange County** including the communities of Santa Ana Heights, El Modena, Orange Park Acres, North Tustin, Lemon and Cowan Heights, and Modjeska and Silverado Canyons.

**South Orange County**  
**(949) 347-2240**

**Cities of:**

Aliso Viejo	Dana Point
Laguna Hills	Laguna Niguel
Lake Forest	Mission Viejo
San Clemente	San Juan Capistrano
Rancho Santa Margarita	

**...and adjacent unincorporated areas of south Orange County** including the communities of Coto de Caza, Emerald Bay, Ladera Ranch, Las Flores, Talega, Rancho Mission Viejo, Ortega Highway, and Trabuco Canyon.

**Santa Ana**  
**(714) 567-3240**

**City of:**  
Santa Ana

**Garden Grove**  
**(714) 638-6353**

**City of:**  
Garden Grove

Email plans and other correspondence to [850@ocfa.org](mailto:850@ocfa.org)

# ATTACHMENT 2 Site Plan Examples

STATE OF CALIFORNIA – HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

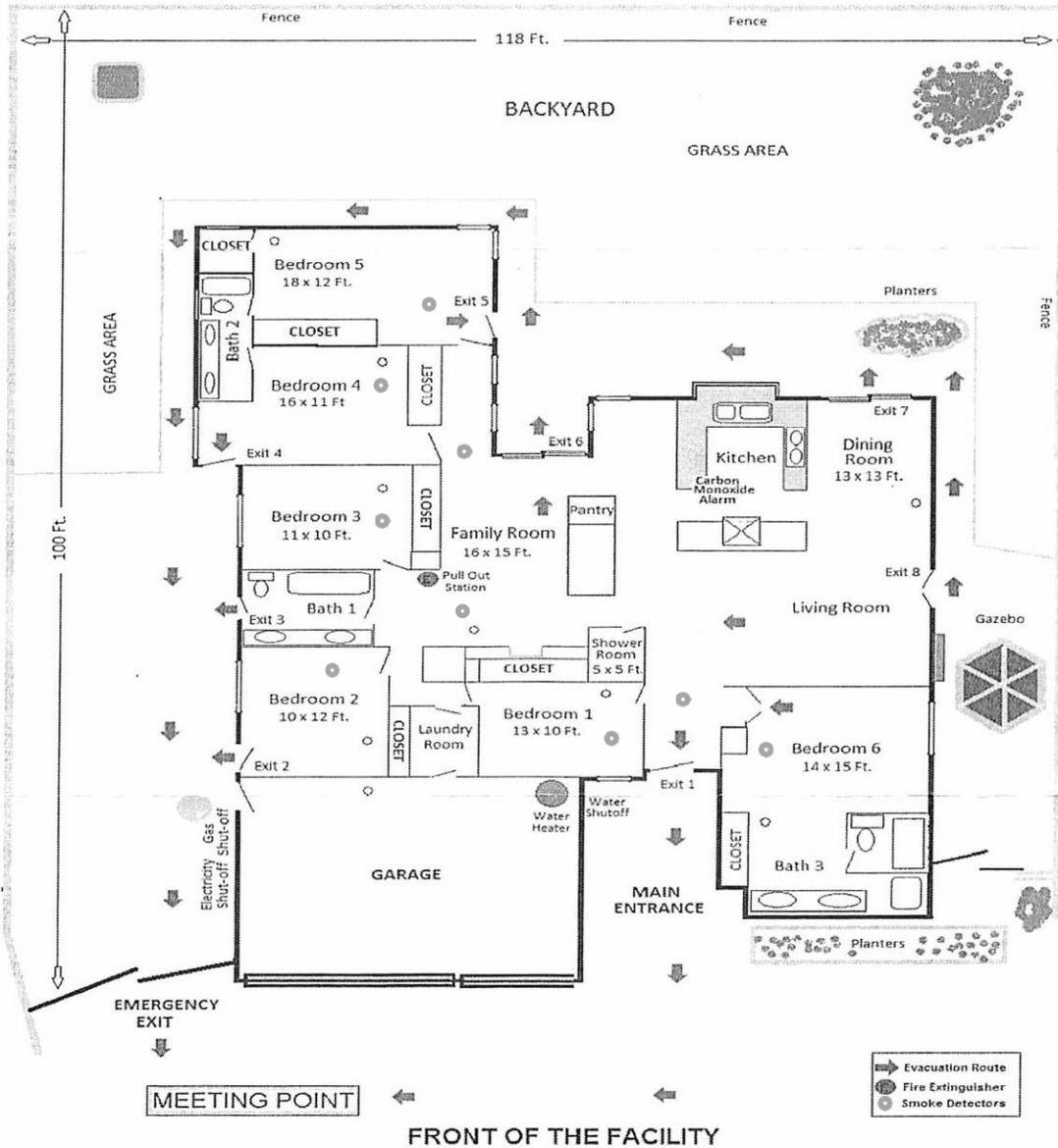
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

## FACILITY SKETCH (Yard)

The yard sketch show all buildings in the yard including the home (with no detail), garage and storage building. Include walks, driveways, play area, fences, gates. Show any potential hazardous area such as pools, garbage storage, animal pens, etc. Try to keep de sizes close to scale.

FACILITY NAME:

**GOLDEN YEARS - PROSPECT**  
4232 Prospect, Yorba Linda, CA 92886

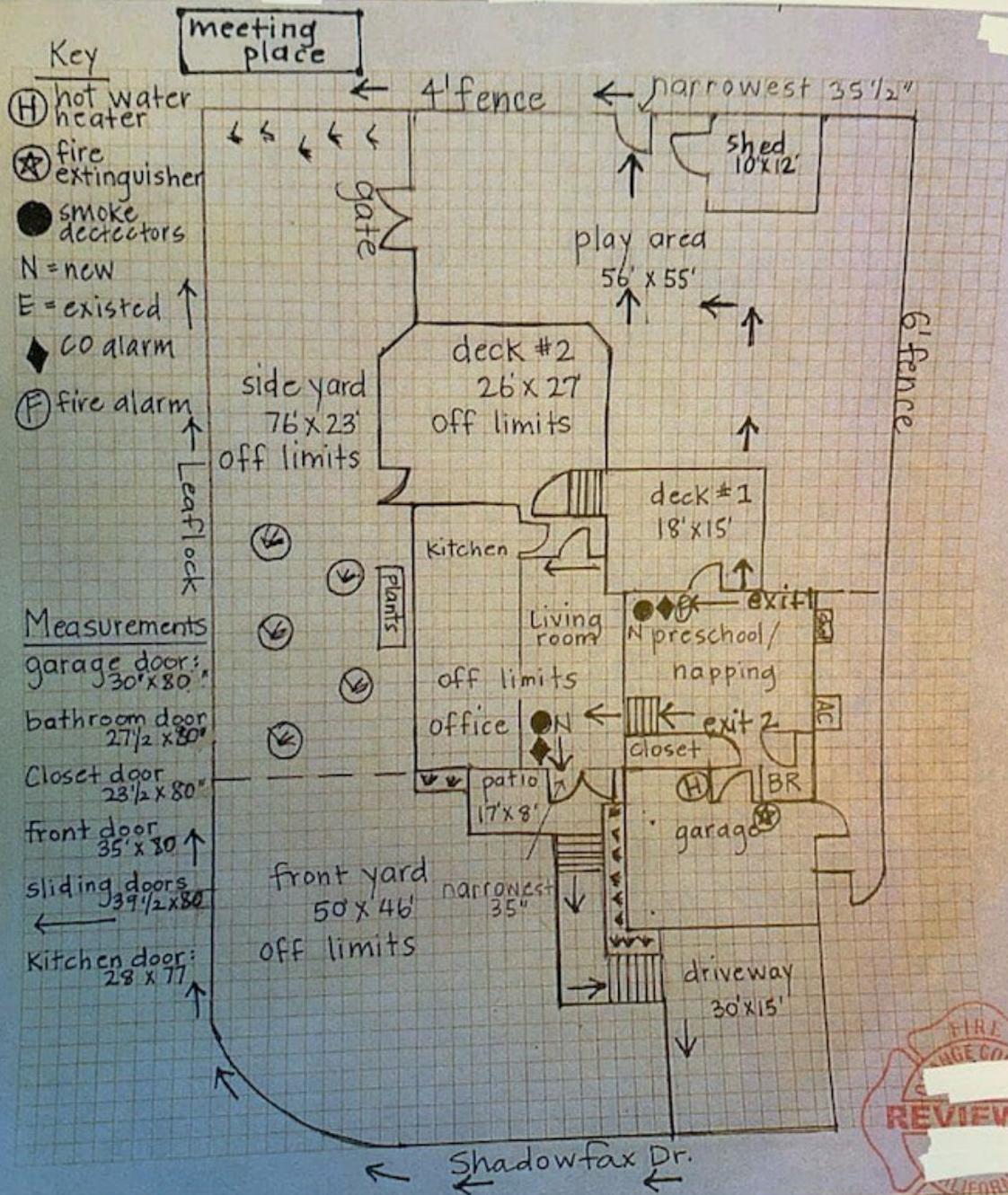


### FACILITY SKETCH (Floor Plan) - Family Child Care Home

Applicants are required to provide a sketch of the floor plan of the home or facility and outside yard. The floor sketch must label room such as the kitchen, bath, living room, etc. Please identify areas which will be "off limits" to children. Door and window exits from the rooms must be shown in case of an emergency (see Emergency Disaster Plan). Show room sizes (e.g. 8.5 x 12). Keep close to scale. Use the space below. See back for yard sketch.

FACILITY NAME

ADDRESS



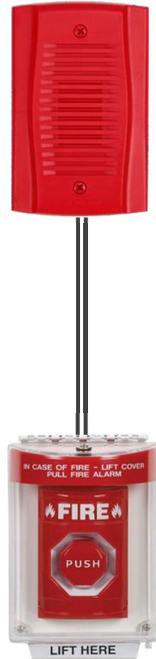


# ATTACHMENT 3 Fire Alarm Configurations

**Pull station  
& bell**



**Push-button (with cover)  
& mini-horn**



**Pull station Combination fire & burglar alarm system  
& horn-strobe with pull station or panic button  
activating smoke alarms and/or mini-horns**



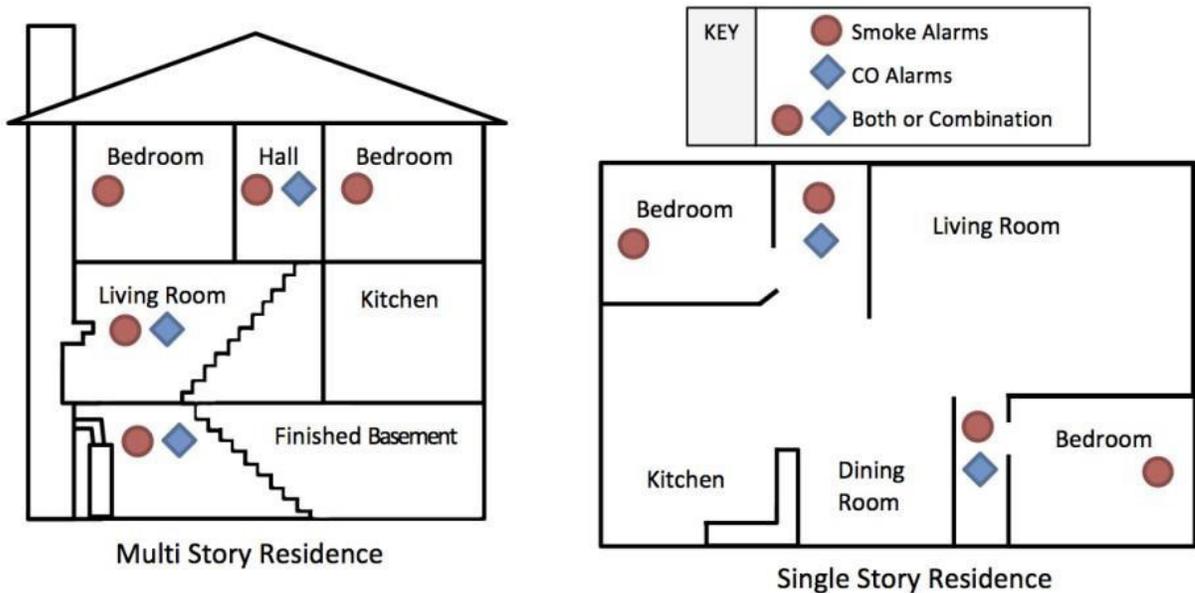
**The combinations of alarm initiating and notification devices shown above are examples only and are not intended to endorse any particular brand, model, or configuration. Other devices may be acceptable *provided they are listed by the California State Fire Marshal* as components of a residential fire alarm system, a commercial fire alarm system, or a combination residential fire and burglar alarm system.**

Where the manual initiating device and/or the notification device is powered by the home's 120V electrical wiring, the connection shall be permitted, inspected, and approved by the local building department. Permits may not be needed where the devices are supplied by low-voltage wiring—verify construction, permit, and inspection requirements with the building department prior to installation.

This fire alarm system is not required to be interconnected with the smoke alarms or CO detectors unless those devices are being used to sound the alarm signal throughout the home.

## ATTACHMENT 4

### Required Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm Locations



#### Smoke Alarms:

1. In each bedroom/sleeping area.
2. In the room or space leading to each separate bedroom/sleeping area in the home (for example, in the hallway serving one or more bedrooms).
3. On each additional story of the dwelling, including basements and finished attics. In split level homes where there is no intervening door between the adjacent levels, a smoke alarm installed on the upper level shall suffice for the adjacent lower level provided that the lower level is less than a full story below the upper level.

***Do not install smoke alarms in bathrooms, garage, crawl space, or unfinished attics. (For kitchens, smoke alarms must be installed  $\geq 10'$  from cooking appliances, regardless of smoke type.) Do not install photoelectric smoke alarms within 3' of a door to a bathroom that has a tub or shower unless this would prevent placement of a device in a space that requires it.***

#### Carbon Monoxide Alarms:

1. In the room or space leading to each separate bedroom/sleeping area in the home (for example, in the hallway serving one or more bedrooms).
2. On every occupiable level, including basements.
3. In every bedroom or sleeping area where there is a fireplace or other fuel-burning appliance located within the space or an attached bathroom.
4. Replace CO detectors every 10 years or according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

## **ATTACHMENT 5**

### **Business Owner Pre-inspection Checklist**

Use this checklist in conjunction with Guideline F-01 to prepare your large family daycare for a fire-clearance inspection by OCFA. As the design and use of individual homes can vary, this checklist is not all-inclusive and other requirements that are not included herein may apply.

#### **GENERAL**

- Building modifications have been approved by the building department
- Garage is not used for daycare unless approved as a living space by the building department
- Home has minimum 4" high address numbers clearly visible from the street

#### **DETECTORS/ALARMS**

- Smoke alarms installed and functional
- Carbon monoxide alarms installed and functional
- Fire alarm installed and audible throughout the home

#### **EXITING**

- Two exit paths from the daycare area to the street are provided
- All exit doors have minimum 32" clear opening width
- Single action hardware is installed on all exit doors and gates
- Deadbolts open in tandem with the primary doorknob
- Keys are not required to open the exit doors/gates in the direction of exit travel
- Exit paths are clear of obstructions
- Basements and sleeping rooms have emergency escape/rescue openings
- Emergency escape/rescue openings lead to the public way and are accessible to firefighters
- Bars/grills over emergency escape/rescue openings are openable from the inside

#### **FIRE EXTINGUISHERS**

- 2A:10B:C fire extinguisher has been provided
- Extinguisher is new or has been serviced in the last year
- Extinguisher is mounted to the wall in a visible and accessible location

#### **FIRE SAFETY**

- Fireplaces and gas-fire water heaters are protected from contact by children
- No combustibles are stored near water heaters or other sources of ignition
- Door between the dwelling and garage is in good condition
- Door between the dwelling and garage is self-closing and latching
- Door between the dwelling and garage is of proper type
- There are no dog-doors, windows, or other openings between the garage and dwelling