

# Orange County Fire Authority

## Community Risk Reduction

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# High-Rise Buildings: Annual Inspections



## Guideline H-04

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# High-Rise Buildings Annual Inspections

## 1. PURPOSE

This document is intended to provide building owners, property managers, and building engineers with a comprehensive outline of the requirements for high-rise buildings as they pertain to annual inspections by the Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA).

## 2. SCOPE

This guideline is applicable to all high-rise buildings within the jurisdiction of the OCFA. A high-rise building is defined as a structure of any type of construction or occupancy having floors used for human occupancy located more than 75 feet above the lowest floor having building access. An exception is buildings used as hospitals as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 1250.

This code section outlines the requirements of an annual fire inspection for compliance with building standards and safety regulations as required by the California State Fire Marshal for all high-rise buildings throughout the state.

## 3. PROCESS

- 3.1 Prior to the OCFA annual inspection of a high-rise, an inspector will contact the building engineer of record via phone or email. The inspector will provide a copy of this guideline and schedule the inspection with the building engineer.
- 3.2 The building engineer is to complete the forms included as attachments in this guideline (Attachment 1 – Fire and Life Safety Tracking Sheet) and provide a copy of each of the required testing reports to the inspector prior to or at the time of the scheduled inspection. *There will be no witnessed testing of the systems during the inspection.* By signing the attached paperwork, the building engineer is verifying that those systems were tested and are functioning as designed.
- 3.3 The building engineer is to provide access to all areas of the high rise, as required, at the time of the inspection. All tenants of the building must be notified that an inspection will occur in advance. Determine if there are any special circumstances regarding access to all of the floors or suites. Address these issues to allow access before the inspection. Notify the inspector of any access issues prior to the time of the inspection. Multiple site visits for inspections due to lack of access may result in additional fees.
- 3.4 At the completion of the inspection, the building engineer may be issued a Fire and Life Safety Inspection Notice if code violations are discovered. If all violations are corrected within the timeframe given on the notice, there will be no additional fees for

reinspections. Additional fees for re-inspections are levied if more than one re-inspection is required.

- 3.5** The building engineer must work to complete the required repairs or systems testing in a timely manner to avoid re-inspection fees. If there is a delay that prevents the completion of repairs or systems testing, contact the inspector before the date of the re-inspection so that it can be rescheduled.
- 3.6** If more time is needed to complete testing or repairs, a work plan may be required. For more information regarding a work plan see Attachment 2.
- 3.7** *For the Inspector* - Upon the completion of the annual high-rise inspection, for buildings 75 ft. and taller, the inspector must complete the Office of the State Fire Marshal Fire & Life Safety Division Annual High-Rise Building Inspection Report (rev 06/13). Health and Safety Code Section 13217(a) require that local fire agencies submit this report no later than thirty (30) days after the date of inspection of any high-rise building. This document will be processed and sent to the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection of the Office of the State Fire Marshal.

# ATTACHMENT 1

## Fire & Life-Safety System Tracking Sheet

Provide this completed form along with documentation to your assigned Fire Inspector during the scheduled fire and life safety inspection. Complete "System Test Date" column to reflect date of most recent test report.

**Business Address** \_\_\_\_\_ **BID#** \_\_\_\_\_

Inspection Type	Frequency of Testing			System Test Date	Reference Section
	6 months	1 year	5 years		
<b>Fire Sprinkler System</b>					<b>A</b>
Full system test/cert			X		
Inspection		X			
Secondary water storage tank			X		
<b>Standpipe System</b>					<b>B</b>
Full system test/cert			X		
Inspection		X			
<b>Fire Pumps</b>					<b>C</b>
Flow test		X			
Inspection cert		X			
<b>Fire Alarm System</b>					<b>D</b>
Full system test/cert		X			
<b>Elevators</b>					<b>E</b>
Phase I & II test		X			
<b>Fire Extinguishers</b>					<b>F</b>
Inspection		X			
<b>Emergency Generator</b>					<b>G</b>
Full system test/cert		X			
Emergency egress lights		X			
<b>Other Systems/Procedures</b>					
Fire drill		X			<b>H</b>
Smoke control		X			<b>I</b>
Fire doors		X			<b>J</b>
Private fire hydrants		X			<b>K</b>
Pre-engineered suppression systems	X				<b>L</b>
Hood and duct suppression systems	X				<b>M</b>
Integrated systems final test report			X <sup>1</sup>		<b>N</b>
Emergency Responder Radio Coverage System		X			<b>O</b>

1. Testing frequency is a maximum of every 10 years. Effective January 1, 2025.

*The Fire Authority may require testing at shorter intervals*

## **Reference sections:**

**A. Fire Sprinkler Systems.** The building fire sprinkler system shall be maintained in service at all times and shall be replaced or repaired when defective. The system shall receive annual maintenance inspections performed by qualified personnel. The system shall also be subject to a 5-year service performed by a C-16 licensed contractor every five years. Records of service and maintenance shall be maintained on the premises for fire department review for a period of not less than five years.

**B. Standpipe System** An arrangement of piping, valve, hose outlets, and allied equipment with outlets located in such a manner that water can be discharged through hose and nozzles attached to such hose outlets for the purpose of extinguishing a fire.

An annual inspection shall be conducted on all class I, II, and III standpipes to visually inspect all components on the system.

A flow test shall be conducted every 5 years on all class I and III standpipe systems to verify that the required flow and pressure are available.

**C. Fire Pumps.** Fire pumps shall be inspected, tested, and maintained annually to verify that the pump assembly is in operating condition and free from physical damage. Tests of pump room environmental conditions, including heating, ventilation, and illumination, shall be made to ensure proper manual or automatic operation of the associated equipment. An annual test of each pump assembly shall be conducted by qualified personnel under no-flow (churn), rated flow, and 150% of the pump rated capacity.

Monthly testing should be conducted on all electrically driven fire pumps, see NFPA 25 for exemptions. Weekly testing should be conducted on all diesel-driven fire pumps. If the building engineer or property owner conducts their own testing of these systems, they must possess a Type L license and maintain a record for review. If the building engineer does not possess this type of license, then a third-party vendor who retains a Type L license or is a C16 licensed contractor must conduct the test.

**D. Fire Alarm System.** Fire alarm systems require annual testing conducted by personnel holding a C-10 electrical or C-7 fire alarm license. The Fire Department will evaluate the test report to ensure all devices in the system have been tested. The building/system owner is responsible for ensuring that necessary repairs and services are performed to continually maintain all systems and devices in proper working order.

**E. Elevators.** Elevator recall systems shall be activated annually to verify their operability. A key-operated switch shall be located on the main floor which shall call the elevator cars to return to the main floor level.

Phase I – Emergency recall operation

Phase II – Emergency in-car operation

**F. Fire Extinguishers.** Fire extinguishers shall be manually inspected at least monthly by the building owner/occupant/authorized agent.

Fire extinguishers shall be serviced annually and shall remain posted in assigned locations and per the California Fire Code. Please note that maintenance involving internal examination may be required depending on extinguisher type. See NFPA 10 for further information.

Class K fire extinguishers shall be provided within 30 feet of cooking equipment.

Portable fire extinguishers shall be located in conspicuous locations where they will have ready access and be immediately available for use. These locations shall be along normal paths of travel, unless the fire code official determines that the hazard posed indicates the need for placement away from normal paths of travel.

Cabinets used to house portable fire extinguishers shall not be locked.

**G. Emergency Generator.** All on-site stand-by power generation systems shall be tested not less than monthly and certified annually. The operating test shall be sufficient to adequately provide an alternate source of electrical energy to serve at least its designated power loads. Standby power shall be provided within 60 seconds after primary power loss.

Emergency power shall be provided within 10 seconds after primary power loss and be provided to the following systems:

- Exit signs and means of egress illumination
- Emergency voice/alarm communication systems
- Elevator car lighting
- Automatic fire detection systems
- Fire alarm systems
- Electrically powered fire pumps
- Power and lighting for the fire command center
- Ventilation and automatic fire detection equipment for smoke-proof enclosures
- Elevators

- H. Fire Drill.** A fire evacuation drill shall be completed annually with records maintained for Fire Dept review. The building owner is responsible for ensuring that a written emergency pre-fire plan is developed, approved, and updated annually or as necessary. This plan should be available in the workplace for reference and review by employees or the fire code official.
- I. Smoke Control.** Smoke control systems are subject to special inspections and tests sufficient to verify the proper commissioning of the smoke control design and its final installed condition. The frequency of testing is determined by the rational analysis conducted during system acceptance. Smoke control systems shall be maintained to ensure to a reasonable degree that the system is capable of controlling smoke for the duration required. The system shall be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and California Fire Code. The buildings smoke control report must be made available to the fire inspector at time of inspection.
- J. Fire Doors.** Fire doors and smoke and draft control doors shall not be blocked, obstructed, or otherwise made inoperable. Opening protectives and smoke and draft control doors shall not be modified. Opening protectives in fire-resistance-rated assemblies/smoke partitions shall be inspected and maintained not less than annually in accordance with NFPA 80 and NFPA 105.
- K. Private Fire Hydrants.** Private fire hydrant systems shall be maintained in an operative condition at all times and shall be repaired where defective. Fire hydrant systems of all types shall be subject to periodic testing including an annual flow test and additional tests after each operation. Additions, repairs, alterations, and servicing shall comply with approved standards. Records of tests and required maintenance shall be maintained.
- L. Pre-Engineered Suppression Systems.** Wet and dry chemical extinguishing systems shall be inspected and tested for proper operation at six-month intervals. Tests shall include a check of the detection system, alarms, and releasing devices, including manual stations and other associated equipment. Extinguishing system units shall be weighed, and the required amount of agent verified. Stored pressure-type units shall be checked for the required pressure. The cartridge of cartridge-operated units shall be weighed and replaced at intervals indicated by the manufacturer.

Service personnel providing or conducting maintenance on automatic fire-extinguishing systems, other than automatic sprinkler systems shall possess a valid certificate issued by an approved government agency, or other organization approved for the type of work performed.

**M. Hood and Duct Suppression Systems.** Commercial cooking equipment that produces grease-laden vapors shall be protected with a Type-1 hood and duct system, in accordance with the California Mechanical Code and covered with an approved automatic UL 300 fire-extinguishing system.

Automatic fire-extinguishing systems shall be serviced not less frequently than every six months and after activation of the system. Inspections shall be by qualified individuals, and a certificate of inspection shall be maintained on-site for fire department review.

Hoods and associated ducting shall be cleaned at intervals to prevent the accumulation of grease that may fuel a fire. Typical intervals are 3 months, 6 months, and 12 months depending on the cooking operation.

**N. Integrated Systems Final Test Report.** For facilities that are required to perform integrated systems testing per CFC Chapter 901.6.2 and that have never undergone integrated systems testing, by January 1, 2025 (5 years after the adoption of NFPA 4), integrated systems testing and an integrated systems final test report shall be completed per NFPA 4. For facilities that have already undergone integrated systems testing and have an integrated system final test report, integrated systems testing shall be conducted a minimum of every 10 years. See CFC Chapter 901.6.2 and NFPA 4 for more information.

**O. Emergency Responder Radio Coverage System.** It is the responsibility of the owner of a building containing or requiring an in-building Emergency Responder Radio Coverage System (ERRCS) to acquire, file, and have available for inspection, copies of the annual inspection report, conducted within the previous 13 calendar months and Approval to Operate documentation provided by the appropriate FCC licensee for each radio network supported by the system. Annual testing and proof of compliance shall be in accordance with Section 510.6.1 of the 2025 California Fire Code.

At time of inspection provide Approval to Operate documentation issued by the Orange County Sheriff's Department. For any questions regarding the process to obtain Approval to Operate documentation, contact OCSD at [ERRCS@ocsheriff.gov](mailto:ERRCS@ocsheriff.gov).

## **ATTACHMENT 2**

### **Workplan**

If more time is needed to complete testing or repairs, a work plan may be required. This work plan must be prepared by the building engineer and contain the following:

- On your company letterhead.
- Must contain the date the work plan was drafted.
- Must contain the address of the facility.
- Must contain the body of the work plan. i.e., Testing and certification of systems and equipment will be conducted on mm/dd/yyyy. Must also note that any deficiencies discovered during the testing and certification will be corrected/repared.
- Must contain your name, title, and signature.

Upon completion of the work plan by the building engineer, it is to be sent to the inspector. The inspector will review it for accuracy, make any recommended changes and approve it. The inspector can close the annual inspection with the work plan.