Common Inspection Hazards

This list is ONLY to provide customers with some common hazards found at inspections. This does not mean it covers all hazards or everything covered under the adopted code or referenced standards, etc. All photos are for example only to help assist in a successful inspection and remain in compliance.

Permitting/Contractor Common Issues:

1. **APPROVED** Plans & Permits must be on site at all times (Permits shall be posted).
2. All new projects including renovations, name changes, ownership changes, building layout or egress changes must be submitted to the city's online permitting site. https://tomballtx.gov/697/Electronic-Submittals-SmartGOV
3. If you are unsure if your work needs a permit or an inspection, contact the Building Department or the Fire Marshals Office.
   Fire Marshal Office – 281-290-1440
   Building Department – 281-290-1400
4. Visit the Fire Departments website at https://tomballtx.gov/172/Fire-Prevention-Fire-Marshal and see our list of Annual Fire Prevention Operational Permits that may be required for new and existing businesses.
5. All Subcontractor must have their APPROVED stamped plans on site along with approved state paperwork for final:
   a. **Fire Alarm** – Plans, license, and SF 035\009
      i. Fire Alarm Panel cannot have troubles or supervisory signals.
   b. **Sprinkler** – Plans, License, and SF042/41
   c. **Hood** – Plans, License, and SF205
   d. **Access Control** (electronic locks or card readers requires permitting) – Plans and License
   e. **HVAC** – License and White Smoke Bombs only (if testing Duct Detectors).

6. Existing System Tags: Fire Alarm, Sprinkler, Fire Suppression Systems (Hood/Paint Booth), and Extinguishers are all required to have inspection tags. The tags are hole-punched with the date last inspected or information of type of service/inspection conducted.





Above are examples of an Annual tag for Fire Alarm and Sprinkler. They must be checked "acceptable" to be "passing" if they have "yellow" or "red" checked; Your system is deficient and is impaired. *Fire Alarm and Fire Sprinkler along with Fire Extinguishers require annual inspections from licensed technicians. Some systems require additional testing.

Once the contractor fixes an issue, they will have to place a white service tag that clears the deficiency.

*Note: Extinguishers and Hood Systems do not always use Blue colored tags. FA and FSS require blue inspection tags.

*Hood Suppression systems are required to be inspected simi-annually.

7. Duct Detectors are required for any HVAC System over 2000 CFMs. Existing or not, provide CFM documentation and install duct detectors on all systems over 2000 CFMs. If there is a fire alarm, tie into the fire alarm and add to fire alarm plans. If there is no fire alarm, have an audio/visual annunciator installed with each duct detector. The system must alarm and shut down when tested with live smoke.





Common General Space Hazards

8. No combustible materials (paper, wood, plastic, etc.) can be stored in mechanical or electrical rooms.



This is an example of combustibles stored too close to electrical panels and equipment.

9. Ensure there is not a large amount of combustible waste material that would create a fire hazard in any area.

10. Ensure Proper Signage: Electrical rooms, mechanical rooms, fire rise room, fire panel (FACP) inside and gas shutoff have signs.















11. Do not hook up electrical equipment with extension cords. They are not for permanent use. Instead use Surge Protectors. Ensure surge protectors are not plugged into another surge protector. They are to plug directly into the wall only. Equipment that pulls more amperage such as a microwave or refrigerator to include a mini fridge must be plugged directly into a wall outlet.







12. Breaker Box and Open Electrical– missing junction boxes and open spaces in electrical panel must have covers and or blanks. There cannot be open gaps in electrical boxes. These blanks are sometimes called “filler Plates” and can be purchased at hardware stores. Also, be sure the electrical box is labeled or has the proper “schedule” for each breaker. Open electrical also includes missing cover plates on outlets/switches/junction boxes, etc. If you have a fire alarm. Put a Fire Alarm lock on the fire alarm breaker if one is there.



Ex. Blanks



Ex. Fire Alarm Lock





Ex. Open Electrical – Must Cover

13. Ensure all ceiling tiles are in place, no holes, no water damage, and no paint on them unless approved form the ceiling tile manufacturer.

14. Ensure ALL fire extinguishers in the building are not expired (1 year inspection). Must have a valid receipt of purchase or an inspection tag from a professional fire protection company. Tag will have hole punches; they expire 1 year from the date hole punched on the tag. Extinguishers should not be mounted higher than 5 feet or lower than 4 inches. The fire extinguisher sticker is not required if the extinguisher is in an open conspicuous location.

15. Ensure egress paths, emergency exits, cannot be blocked with storage items.

16. Egress doors must all have a landing, cannot exit to grass/dirt. Pour landing at least width of door and 44 inches out.

17. Ensure ALL exit signs are working. Turn off the power to the business to ensure that the exit light comes on. (See example with Egress Lights and without below.)





18. Ensure emergency lights are also working (bug eyes). Turn off power to the business to ensure that exit and emergency lights come on. Your egress lighting may be included on your exit sign sometimes. *Regardless if existing business or new. All buildings shall have adequate illuminated exit and emergency lighting inside.





19. Address is required on front and back door. Make sure the address and or suite number is not less than 4 inches in height, in contrasting color than window/door and is visible from the street. Suite number/address must also be on the back door.

20. Door Locks: A Lock indicator is required on the front door for locks that require a key to lock and unlock. Or you can switch the keyed interior lock for a thumb turn.





21. Ensure signage on main door has statement “This door to remain unlocked when building is occupied”.

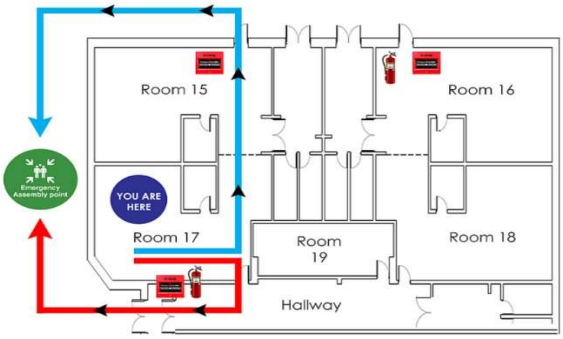


22. If business has doorknobs installed, remove, and install door lever style handles on all doors that the public will be using. (ensure made for commercial and not residential use)



23. Fabrics: If fabrics are used in business (curtains, etc.) then they are required to be treated with a fire-retardant spray/liquid. The fabric must be tagged with the following info: Date treated, name of person who treated, and type of spray used. Fabrics shall be retreated annually or when washed.

24. If required by the fire code provide (Emergency Preparedness plans Compliant with chapter 4 of the IFC). Email your inspector for a template or an example if you need assistance creating a plan. If required by the fire code, Fire evacuation plans shall be created. (Example of a proper Evac Map below).



25. Ensure storage remains 2 feet below the ceiling in non-sprinkled and 18 inches below a sprinkler head if the building is equipped with a fire sprinkler system.

26. In most cases the FD requires Knox Boxes to be present. Ensure to have a Knox box to access Fire Sprinkler Rooms, Fire Alarm Rooms, and other critical areas that would otherwise hinder the response or access to the FD. Have box keyed to the City of Tomball (If in City Limits) and have spare keys ready to lock up inside. If you are in a strip center and there is not a Knox Box, notify your property manager and your inspector prior to final. All Buildings need to have FD access. Contact your FM office if you have any questions.



27. Ensure that fire lanes are painted red with white letters. Striping – Fire apparatus access roads shall be marked by painted lines of red traffic paint six inches (6”) in width to show the boundaries of the lane. The words "FIRE LANE NO PARKING TOW-AWAY ZONE” shall appear in four inch (4”) white letters at 50 feet intervals on the red border markings along both sides of the fire lanes. Where a curb is available, the stripping shall be on the vertical face of the curb.





28. Fire Lane Signs- Signs – shall read “NO PARKING FIRE LANE TOW AWAY ZONE” and shall be twelve inches (12”) wide and eighteen inches (18”) high. Signs shall be painted on a white background with letters and borders in red, using not less than two-inch lettering. Signs shall be permanently

affixed to a stationary post and the bottom of the sign shall be six feet, six inches (6'6”) above finished grade. Signs shall be spaced not more than thirty feet (30') apart. Signs may be installed on permanent buildings or walls or as approved by the fire code official. “TOW AWAY ZONE” must be on all fire lanes in the city limits.



29. If installed – gates that enter the property shall have a Knox box or 911 box with Knox pad lock on Gate. (Example of Knox Box is below). Note: Often the box hole is not large enough for Knox Lock on the red FD gate boxes. Have drill on site with large drill bit to widen hole if needed. Customers can also call local fire department to request a Knox lock be locked at any time.





30. Commercial Kitchen Hood Cleaning – commercial cooking ventilation must have been cleaned by a professional cleaning company in the last 6 months or according to your grease accumulation that must remain in compliance with NFPA 96. There must be a cleaning sticker on the hood or proof of a professional cleaning. If there is a Wok System, then cleaning is required every 3 months.



Example of Hood Cleaning Sticker on side of Hood

31. If you have a Kitchen and a Commercial Hood System a Silver Class K Extinguisher is required. Current annual inspection tag by a Fire protection company is required.

32. If applicable – Panic hardware must be installed and maintained. An extra lock (deadbolt, bolt lock, etc.) Is not allowed with Panic Hardware.

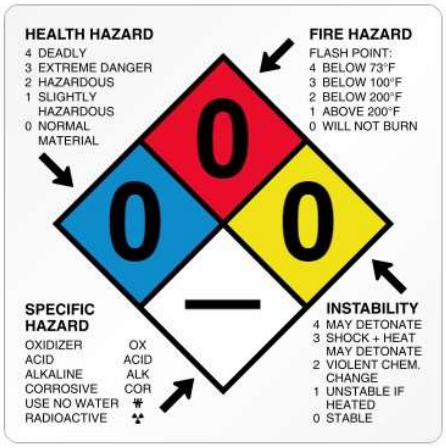






33. Paint Booths (If applicable) –Ensure inspection tag is current, filters are clean. If existing, be sure to have Operational Permit for Spraying/Dipping.

34. Hazardous Signs (If applicable) – Hazard identification sign – NFPA 704 sign – Is required for Hazmat material, chemicals, gases, etc. And shall be rated for the highest hazard. You can find these ratings on the 1st page of the chemicals SDS sheet. (See Examples Below)





35. Compressed Gases (If Applicable)- Gas canisters shall be labeled and secured in some type of manner (to the wall, shelf, in a case, etc.) If you have a restaurant, you probably have CO2 canisters. Be sure they are secure.





36. Liquid Storage Cabinets (If Applicable)- If you have enough flammable materials, you may require an approved yellow flammable liquids cabinet. If you are unsure if you require one based on what you have, please ask your inspector.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Tomball Fire Marshal's Office

1200 Rudel Rd, Tomball, Texas, 77375

Admin: 281-351-7101

Fire Prevention: 281-290-1440

After Hours Emergency: 281-351-5451

Fire Marshal Jeffery Cook