



ANNOUNCEMENT: C-20-07
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY LEARNING
BUREAU OF CERTIFICATION

ISSUE DATE: July 1, 2020
EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately
SUNSET DATE: Ongoing

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| SUBJECT: | Fire Safety Training for Child Care Centers may be obtained online during the COVID-19 Pandemic |
| TO: | Child Care Center Operators and Employees Early Learning Resource Centers Office of Child Development and Early Learning Staff |
| FROM: | Tracey Campanini Deputy Secretary, Office of Child Development & Early Learning  |

PURPOSE:

To inform child care center providers and staff that the annual fire safety training can be temporarily obtained online during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

BACKGROUND:

On March 6, 2020, Governor Tom Wolf issued a Proclamation of Disaster Emergency (“the Disaster Proclamation”). As a result, face to face fire safety trainings for child care center providers and staff were cancelled and discontinued until further notice as a strategy to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

DISCUSSION:

The current regulations that are in effect for fire safety are:

55 Pa. Code §3270.31(e)(4)(ii) relating to Age and Training. *Fire safety training states* Staff persons shall participate, at least annually, in fire safety training conducted by a fire protection professional. Staff persons and volunteers shall receive training in maintenance of smoke detectors, the duties of facility persons during a fire drill and during a fire and the use of the facility’s fire extinguishers, not including discharge of the fire suppressant agent.

55 Pa. Code §3270.4 relating to Definitions defines a *Fire protection professional* as an individual knowledgeable and competent in fire inspections, fire detection, fire suppression systems and practices, fire service training, emergency preparedness planning and emergency evacuation whose competence is demonstrated by membership in a professional organization which promotes fire safety education.

As centers reopen, providers should start arranging for all staff to complete annual fire safety training if their current fire safety training certification is about to expire or has expired. Staff whose fire safety training was cancelled or could not be scheduled due to the COVID-19 pandemic will be afforded the opportunity to complete the DHS approved fire safety course. This training course will be deemed acceptable up until 30 days after the Disaster Proclamation is lifted or such other time as the Department directs. After this period the in-person fire safety training requirement will be the only acceptable training mechanism for fire safety training. Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) maintains that face to face trainings for fire safety are most appropriate. In person trainings, allow the fire safety professional to respond to questions from the staff and give guidance specific to the facility. To find fire safety trainings, individuals should first

reach out to their local municipality, fire chief or other fire protection specialist to see if there are any face to face trainings available that meet the regulatory requirements relating to fire safety training. In the event the provider and staff cannot schedule in person fire safety training OCDEL will temporarily accept the following approved fire safety online training described herein.

Better Kid Care (BKC) offers an OCDEL approved online fire safety course, which is called *Department of Human Services (DHS) Fire Safety Training*. This course meets the requirements of the regulation and will temporarily satisfy the annual fire safety training requirement. Once the Disaster Proclamation is lifted and the face to face trainings can resume, the DHS Training will continue to be available through BKC for all facilities to access to help reinforce the annual training requirements, however it will no longer satisfy the fire safety training requirement.

Providers and staff may access the fire safety training through the PD Registry at www.papdregistry.org and searching for *DHS Fire Safety Training*.

DHS fire safety requirements include proof that the staff person has completed the training. As per 55 Pa. Code §3270.31(f) certification representatives will be requesting documentation for completion of the fire safety training for all staff.

NEXT STEPS:

Child care providers must:

1. Read this Announcement and share with appropriate staff
2. Gather pertinent documentation that requires review during inspections
3. Reach out your local fire chief or other fire safety specialist to see if they are offering any face to face fire safety trainings that are conducive to social distance practices.
4. Have staff register and complete the *Department of Human Services Fire Safety Training* if face to face training is unavailable,

Comments and Questions Regarding this Announcement Should be Directed to the Provider's Regional Office of Child Development and Early Learning: Central Region 800-222-2117; Northeast Region 800-222-2108; Southeast North and Southeast South Region 800-346-2929; Western Region 800-222-2149.