



## LICENSED CHILDCARE CENTERS

Plan Review Procedures & Code Requirements

IOWA STATE FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

STATE BUILDING CODE BUREAU

215 East 7th Street

Des Moines, IA 50319

Phone: 515-725-6145 Fax: 515-725-6172

Email: [bcinfo@dps.state.ia.us](mailto:bcinfo@dps.state.ia.us)

State Fire Marshal: [dps.iowa.gov/divisions/state-fire-marshal](https://dps.iowa.gov/divisions/state-fire-marshal)

Building Code Bureau: [dps.iowa.gov/divisions/state-fire-marshal/building-code](https://dps.iowa.gov/divisions/state-fire-marshal/building-code)

### State Fire Marshal's Role

The SFM reviews plans and performs inspections to verify that childcare centers comply with State codes. The SFM may order corrections to a building for applicable code deficiencies. SFM Construction Engineers and Inspectors who review plans or perform inspections are not authorized to design facilities or propose changes to facilities to comply with state codes. **The owner of the childcare facility is responsible to contact a licensed design professional** to design new and to evaluate existing buildings for code conformance and assist in preparing drawings and other documents as required by the SFM for plan review. The owner is responsible to notify the State Inspector (who is listed on the final report) to request an inspection after the plan review approval is granted. The building may be occupied after the State Fire Inspector approves the final inspection for occupancy.

Please direct any questions to the SFM for issues that are not clearly explained in this handout by phone or email. **Design questions and code compliance issues should be directed to the licensed design professional** that is responsible to evaluate the facility or prepare the drawings for plan review. Code interpretation issues may be directed to the SFM design engineers who review the submitted projects. Additional information for required plans is listed below.

### Existing Buildings

- If a childcare facility is moving into an existing building without additions or renovations, a licensed Architect or Engineer must conduct a Code Compliance Evaluation.
- The evaluation shall include a code analysis and floor plan of the entire building.
- The evaluation shall be submitted to the State Fire Marshal through the online application process.
- The application shall be submitted as an Exemption from Plan Review if the evaluation does not find any deficiencies.

### General Plan Review Requirements

- **A design professional licensed in the State of Iowa (Architect or Engineer) is required.**
- Licensed Childcare facilities which are required to be reviewed by the State Fire Marshal (SFM) shall be inspected prior to issuance of a DHS State License.
- A preliminary review is required for new projects or projects that include significant renovations.

### **Occupancy Classification**

**Institutional Group I-4** – A building or structure that that is occupied by five or more people of any age who receive custodial care for fewer than 24 hours a day. This does not include:

- Parents or guardians being cared for
- Relatives by blood, marriage, or adoption being cared for
- If the building is in the dwelling place of the persons being cared for

**Educational Group E** – A childcare facility will be considered an educational occupancy if the following applies:

- Care is given to more than 5, but less than 100, children ages 2 ½ years and younger
- Rooms in which children ages 2 ½ and younger are located on the ground floor
- Rooms in which children ages 2 ½ and younger have direct exits to the outside

### **Specific Code Requirements for Group E Occupancies**

- An automatic sprinkler system is required when any of the following conditions exist:
  - If care is provided below the ground level.
  - When the building footprint exceeds the allowable area for the building construction type.
  - When the portion of the building where the child care is located is greater than 12,000 square feet.
- In a building that is not equipped with an automatic sprinkler system, a 1-hour fire-rated corridor is required if both of the following conditions exist:
  - If the corridor serves more than 30 people.
  - Every child care room does not have an exit door to the outside.
- Fire Alarms are required when the calculated occupant load is more than 50.
- An emergency voice/alarm communication system is required when the occupant load is more than 100.
- Carbon monoxide detection is required if there is fuel fired equipment.

### **General Code Requirements**

- Childcare facilities shall comply with the State Fire, Building (which includes ADA standards and Energy Code), Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing Code.
- Childcare facilities that have a stove top must comply with the State Fire Marshal Policy
- Fire extinguishers shall be installed as per code requirements in the 2015 IFC, section 906
- Rooms with calculated occupant loads of 50 or more are required to have two exits, doors that are equipped with panic hardware and swing in the direction of travel, exit signs, and emergency lighting.
- All exits shall have paved surface to the public way, parking lot, or road.
- **Plans shall be sealed & signed by an Iowa licensed Architect or Engineer.**



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### Stove Stop Policy

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### Policy

It is the policy of this Division to require protection for cooking appliances that produce grease laden vapors. This policy does not prevent local jurisdictions from enforcing requirements more strict than the requirements enforced by the State Fire Marshal Division.

### Procedure

1. A Type I hood protected by a UL300 extinguishment system shall be installed where there is a domestic cooking appliance serving an occupant load of 50 or more persons or where commercial cooking appliances are installed.
2. A residential hood protected by a UL300A fire suppression system may be permitted if the following criteria are met:
  - A. Meals are prepared for less than 50 persons utilizing domestic cooking appliances for the area being served.
  - B. A control switch meeting all of the following is provided:
    - (a) A locked switch, or a switch located in a restricted location, is provided within the cooking facility that deactivates the cooktop or range.
    - (b) The switch is used to deactivate the cooktop or range whenever the kitchen is not under staff supervision.
    - (c) The switch is on a timer, not exceeding a 120-minute capacity that automatically deactivates the cooktop or range, independent of staff action.
3. In educational occupancies (K-12), if the stove equipment is utilized for training purposes, multiple residential stoves may be used if separated by a minimum distance of 36 inches and protected by UL300A hood suppression systems.
4. Portable fire extinguishers complying with NFPA 10 shall be located within 30 feet of all cooking appliances and be located in the room where the cooking appliances are being used.
5. Hoods and suppression systems shall be installed per manufacturer's specifications.