

McDowell County Fire Inspection Information

MacKenzie Burnette

What must be inspected?

- Fire inspections are required for all premises except for one- and two-family dwellings and are scheduled based on occupancy type as defined by the North Carolina State Fire Prevention Code. The following examples typically illustrate the minimum frequency rate of inspections; however, it is not an all-inclusive list, and nothing in the North Carolina Fire Prevention Code is intended to prevent a jurisdiction from conducting more frequent inspections than the following schedule.



1 Year (Annual) Fire Inspections

'A' – Assembly:
Restaurants, Gyms,
Nightclubs, facilities with
occupant loads of more
than 100, etc....

'E' – Educational
Facilities: Schools,
Daycares

- Public schools are required to be inspected every six months

'H' – Hazardous:
Hazardous materials,
flammable liquids,
explosives facilities,
etc....

'I' – Institutional:
Hospitals, Nursing
Homes, Licensed care
facilities, etc....

'R' – Residential:
Apartment buildings,
Hotels/Motels,
Fraternities/Sororities,
etc....

High-Rise Buildings

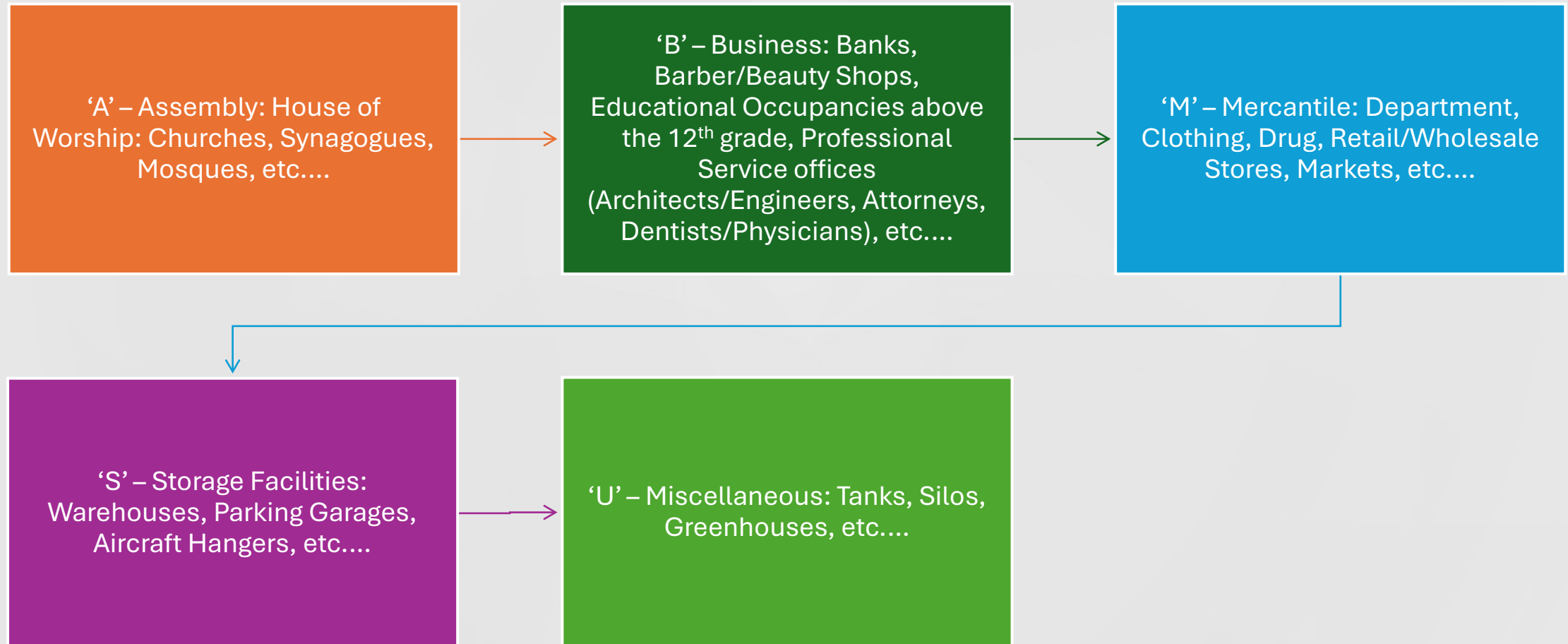
2 Year Fire Inspections

'E' – Educational Facilities:
Private Schools



'F' – Factory:
Manufacturing/Industrial

3 Year Fire Inspections



The Fire Code Official will examine many things throughout your business. As a public service, McDowell County Building Inspections is providing you with a self-checklist to assist you and your business in assessing your surroundings. The checklist is just to give you a better understanding of what inspectors look for and is to assist you in obtaining a complete/passing fire inspection.



This checklist is not all-inclusive by any means. Some businesses will require other items above and beyond what is listed.



Pre-Fire Inspection Checklist Items

Exits & Emergency Lighting

1013.1 Where required.

- Exits and exit access doors shall be marked by an approved exit sign readily visible from any direction of egress travel. The path of egress travel to exits and within exits shall be marked by readily visible exit signs to clearly indicate the direction of egress travel in cases where the exit or the path of egress travel is not immediately visible to the occupants. Intervening means of egress doors within exits shall be marked by exit signs. Exit sign placement shall be such that no point in an exit access corridor or exit passageway is more than 100 feet (30 480 mm) or the listed viewing distance for the sign, whichever is less, from the nearest visible exit sign.
- Exit ways and doors shall not be visually or physically blocked. These must always be unblocked and accessible when a building is occupied and in use.
- Proper exit signs shall be used.
- Illuminated exit signs shall be illuminated at all times, including during power outages for a minimum of 90 minutes.
Make sure your exit signs are illuminated and check their battery backup.
- Exit ways shall be illuminated at all times when the building is occupied including during power outages. Make sure your emergency lights are in working order and check their battery backup.
- Emergency lighting shall be tested monthly for no less than 30 seconds with a longer test every 6 months.
- All exit doors must have the proper lock/hardware. (No flush bolts or hasps)
- Fire doors, smoke dampers, and all other fire resistance barriers and assemblies shall not be modified or otherwise impaired from proper orientation at any point in time. (No propping fire doors)

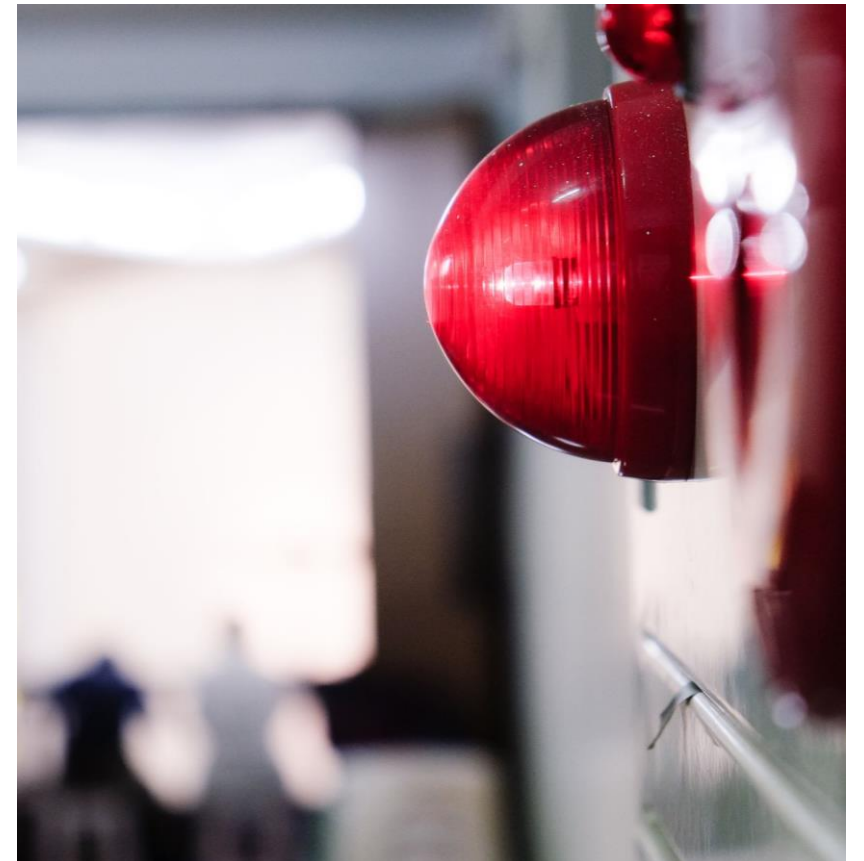


Combustible and Flammable Material Storage

- Combustible materials (Cardboard, paper, plastics, paints, etc.) shall not be stored in boiler rooms, mechanical rooms, or around electrical equipment.
- Combustible materials shall not be stored in exits or exit pathways.
- Combustible storage shall be at least 2 feet below the ceiling and 18 inches below sprinkler heads.
- Compressed gas containers, cylinders, and tanks shall be secured to prevent them from falling over.
- Flammable materials (gasoline, kerosene, propane, alcohol,) shall not be stored indoors. This includes fuel tanks for motorcycles, lawn-care equipment, cooking equipment, etc.
- Outside dumpsters shall be kept at least 5 feet away from combustible walls, windows, doors, overhangs, and lids shall be attached and appropriately used.

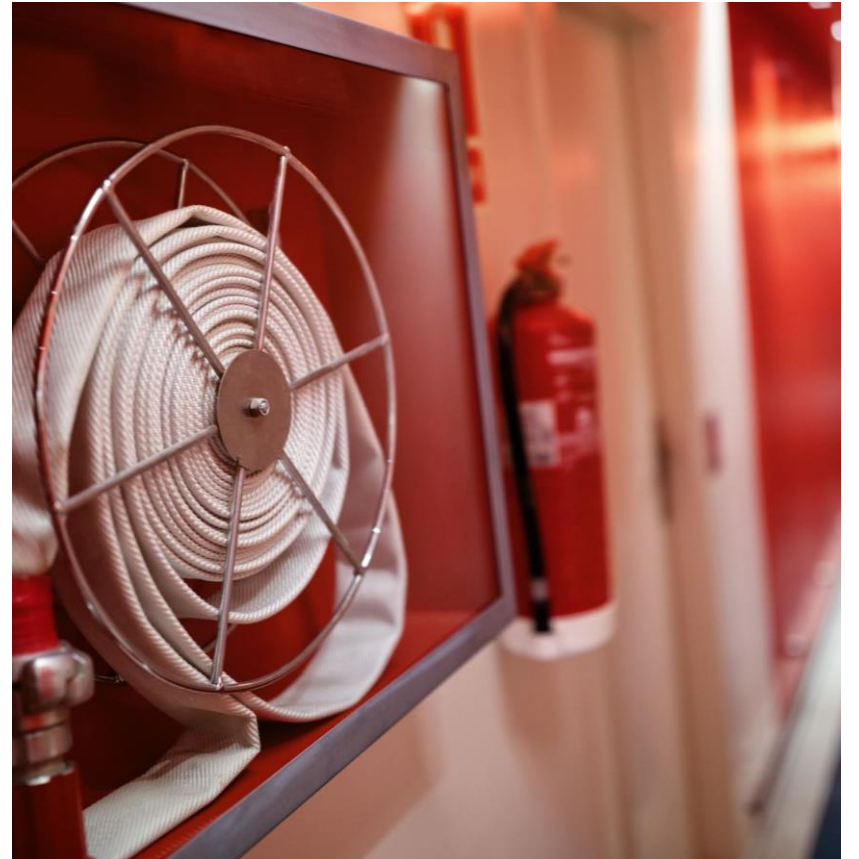
Fire Protection Systems Inspection, Testing And Maintenance

- Sprinkler and fire alarm systems shall be properly serviced, at the appropriate intervals by qualified individuals.
- Records of all fire protection system inspections, tests, and maintenance shall be kept on the premises and be available for review during the inspection.
- Fire protection systems shall be maintained in an operative condition at all times and repaired when defective. If your system quits working the Fire code official must be notified immediately at (828)-559-7313. A Fire Watch may have to be conducted until the system can be restored.
- Commercial cooking fire protection systems shall be serviced and tagged at the appropriate intervals by qualified individuals.
- Hoods, grease removal devices, fans, ducts, and other appurtenances shall be cleaned to the bare metal. Cleaning shall be recorded, and the records shall state the extent, time and date of the cleaning and shall be available for review by the fire inspector/code official.
- Standpipes shall be tested every 5 years with flows taken every 3 years.



Building Maintenance

- All private hydrants, fire lanes, fire department connections (FDC) and control valves shall be clear, visible, and unobstructed at all times.
- The Building address must be clearly visible from the street, with a minimum height of 6 inches and in a contrasting color.
- All Fire-resistant rated construction must be maintained. Cannot have unprotected holes in the walls, ceilings, floors etc.
- Occupant load signs are to be legible, permanent, and posted in a conspicuous location near the main entrance of assembly occupancies. (includes restaurants etc.)
- Door labels are required for rooms containing Electrical, Furnace, Sprinkler, Mechanical, and/or Generators.
- Charcoal grills, propane grills, heaters, or other open-flame cooking devices shall not be located inside a structure, on combustible balconies, or within 10 feet of combustible construction. (Exceptions: 1 & 2 family dwellings, balconies/decks that are protected with automatic sprinkler systems.)
- Area around buildings must be free of combustible materials (weeds, brush, trash, litter, boxes, etc.)



Electrical

- A working space of not less than 30 inches wide (or width of equipment), 36 inches deep (in front of), and 78 inches high shall be provided in front of electrical service equipment. There can be no storage within this designated area or closet.
- "Power strips" (relocatable power taps) shall be UL-listed, polarized, grounded, and equipped with over-current
- "Power strips" shall be directly connected to a permanently installed receptacle. No "daisy chaining".
- "Power strips" cords shall not extend through walls, ceilings, floors, under doors, or floor coverings, nor be subject to environmental or physical
- Extension cords, multi-plug adapters, and flexible cords shall not be a substitute for permanent wiring.
- Multi-plug adapters are not allowed.
- All Electrical Boxes shall be properly covered. All spacers must be in place.
- No exposed electrical wires. All electrical wiring terminations must be in a junction box cover.
- All Electrical outlets have proper cover in place.

Portable Fire Extinguishers

- A minimum of one 2A, 10:B, C portable fire extinguisher shall be provided within 75 feet of travel distance from anywhere in the business on each floor.
- A Class K fire extinguisher shall be mounted within 30 feet but no closer than 10 feet of commercial food equipment using vegetable or animal oils.
- Fire extinguishers shall not be obstructed and shall be in a conspicuous location and easily accessible by everyone at all times.
- When visually obstructed, an approved means shall be provided to indicate their location.
- The fire extinguishers shall be mounted on the wall with an appropriate manufacturer's hanger.
- Portable fire extinguishers weighing under 40 lbs. shall be hung so that the clearance between the floor and the bottom of the extinguisher is no less than 4 inches. And So that the top of the extinguisher is no higher than 5 feet above the floor.
- Portable fire extinguishers weighing more than 40 lbs. shall be installed so that their tops are no more than 3.5 feet above the floor.
- Service personnel providing or conducting maintenance on portable fire extinguishers shall possess a valid certificate issued by an approved governmental agency, or other approved organization for the type of work performed.
- Fire extinguishers have evidence of proper annual and monthly testing and servicing.

**NOTE: This list is a general guideline only
for common violations that can be
readily determined**

What must be
permitted?

A permit must be pulled to receive an inspection. You need a permit and inspection if you own or operate an.....

Assembly Occupancy

Business Occupancy

Education Occupancy

Factory Industrial Occupancy

High-Hazard Occupancy

Institutional Occupancy

Mercantile Occupancy

Residential Occupancy (Excluding 1 & 2 Family Dwellings)

Storage Occupancy

Also Requires a Mandatory Permit Per The Fire Code.

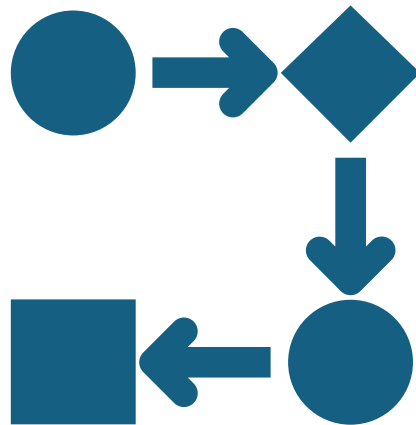
- Special amusement buildings require an operational permit.
- Carnivals and fairs require an operational permit.
- Combustible dust-producing operations require an operational permit.
- Covered and open mall buildings require an operational permit.
- Exhibits and Trade shows require an operational permit.
- Explosives, explosive materials, fireworks, and pyrotechnic special effects require an operational permit.
- Fumigation and Insecticidal Fogging requires an operational permit.
- Liquid- or gas-fueled vehicles or equipment in assembly buildings.
- Private fire hydrants.
- Spraying or Dripping operations utilizing flammable or combustible liquids or the application of combustible powders.
- Temporary membrane structures and tents.
- Temporary sleeping units for disaster relief workers.

To apply and receive a permit

- 1) Visit <https://www.mcdowellgov.com/>
- 2) Under Departments click on Building Inspections
- 3) Click on our blue online permitting portal link and sign up. Our online portal is available 24/7 for your convenience. <http://co-mcdowell-nc.smartgovcommunity.com/>
- 4) After signing up be sure to confirm your email.
- 5) Then apply for a “Fire” permit of whatever kind you need.
- 6) If you do not see a permit for exactly what you need please add details to the project description.



If You Need Help With Applying For A Permit or Setting Up Your Portal Account



- There are multiple step-by-step PDFs on our Department website that will walk you through the entire process click by click!

How to reach out to McDowell County Fire Code Officials?

- Tommy Clifton- Senior Building and Fire Code Official- (828)-925-2065

Thomas.Clifton@mcdowellgov.com

- MacKenzie Burnette- Fire Code Official- (828)-559-7313

Mackenzie.burnette@mcdowellgov.com