



Instructions and Tips for Creating Compliant Policies and Procedures: Child Care Centre Fire Safety Procedures and Drills (O. Reg. 137/15, ss. 68(1))

Mandatory Information

Licenseses of child care centres are required to establish a written procedure approved by the local fire chief that outlines the duties of child care centre staff members in the event of a fire to demonstrate compliance with requirements under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* and O. Reg. 137/15.

Other Considerations

The following are some tips and other considerations for developing your fire safety procedures. These are not mandatory, but they will support the development of more comprehensive and high-quality procedures:

General

- Provide definitions for ambiguous terms used throughout your procedures.
- Include a space to put the date that the procedures were last developed and/or updated.
- Include other regulatory requirements in your procedures (e.g. requirements to conduct fire drills, to ensure each staff is instructed as to his or her responsibility in the event of a fire before commencing work for the first time, that every supervisor and employee who is counted in ratios must have a valid certification in standard first aid, including infant and child CPR, etc.).
- Set out your procedures based on the following topics:
 1. Fire prevention procedures
 2. Procedures to prepare for a fire evacuation, including fire drills; and
 3. Procedures to follow during a fire evacuation
- Be clear about the intent of your fire safety procedures and drills and what you are trying to achieve through their implementation.

1. Developing Fire Prevention Procedures

- State that the child care centre will comply with Ontario Fire Code, made under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, including requirements such as:
 - Using flame-retardant drapes, curtains and other decorative materials must be used in any lobby or exit area where there are more than 100 children and staff in a child care centre;
 - Ensuring that the spaces for storage of hazardous substances are inaccessible to children;
 - Not allowing combustible waste materials to accumulate in amounts or locations which would constitute a fire hazard;
 - Storing flammable creative materials in metal containers or containers that are approved by the Underwriters Laboratories of Canada; and
 - Ensuring all waste containers are made of non-combustible materials and have lids, and avoiding the use of plastic.

- Check with the local fire department for additional information or restrictions related to fire safety, and reflect these in your procedures (e.g. use of plastic garbage bins, wall posting restrictions, etc.)

2. Developing Procedures to Prepare for a Fire Evacuation, Including Fire Drills:

- Describe what kind of audible and/or visual fire alarm signal will be used for fire drills and in case of a real fire requiring emergency evacuation.
- Identify the designated place(s) of shelter for short- and long-term evacuations (i.e. temporary relocations) in the evacuation procedures and set out that written approval be obtained to use the designated place(s) of shelter.
- Set out how often written approval to use designated space(s) of shelter must be reviewed and updated.
- Describe how and when the information about evacuation shelters will be reviewed and updated (e.g. the location, the hours of operation) to ensure there are one or more evacuation shelters that are accessible and available during the child care centre's business hours, taking into consideration extended hours and overnight care, where applicable..
- Describe how families will be advised of emergencies and the designated place(s) of shelter.
- Require that an emergency bag be prepared for every play activity room that includes essential items (e.g. a first aid kit, gloves, emergency contact information, hand sanitizer, snacks, water, writing materials, blankets, etc.).
- Ensure a system is in place that ensures the emergency bag contents are checked and replenished on a regular basis, or that there is a plan that can be implemented where supplies need to be obtained during an evacuation.
- Link the procedures to other regulatory requirements (e.g. keeping and recording attendance, ensuring supervision of children is maintained at all times, having emergency contact information readily available, maintaining ratios, conducting and keeping records of all fire drills, posting the fire procedure in a conspicuous place in each room, etc.).
- Link the procedures to other policies and procedures required under regulation (e.g. serious occurrence reporting, process for monitoring compliance and contraventions, emergency management policies and procedures, etc.).
- Identify a meeting place for everyone to assemble and be accounted for during a fire drill.
- Provide a step-by-step process to conduct fire drills, including details such as where children will line up, how to ensure accommodation is made for individuals requiring assistance in case of an evacuation, how to transition to the meeting place, what documentation is required, etc.
- Set out the frequency at which fire drills will be conducted as set out in O. Reg. 137/15, as applicable.
- Set out requirements to practice fire drills regularly until children and staff are familiar with the process, including conducting practices and drills during different times of the day and including evacuation from all areas of the centre including sleep areas.

3. Developing Procedures to Follow During a Fire Evacuation:

- Assign specific roles and responsibilities to each staff member at the child care centre to undertake emergency duties, and set out the procedures to follow in a step-by-step process that clearly outlines roles and responsibilities in language or in a visual that is easy to understand and follow.
- Include the following procedures for staff to implement, where possible and safe to do so:
 - Assisting anyone in immediate danger;
 - Trying to isolate any burning area by closing the door;
 - Turning off stoves or other similar electrical appliances;
 - Sounding the alarm;
 - Retrieving the emergency bag and attendance records;
 - Directing children to safety at the designated place(s) of shelter for short- and long-term evacuations with staff placed strategically among the group of children (e.g. one staff in the front to lead the group, one staff in the middle of the line, and another staff at the back of the line);
 - Searching the premises including washroom areas, closets and other hiding places;
 - Closing all doors and ensuring that the building is locked after everyone has vacated;
 - Administering first aid, where required;
 - Contacting emergency services (e.g. local fire department);
 - Conducting regular head counts of children;
 - Remaining at the designated place of shelter until parents are notified of the evacuation and have arrived to pick up their children.