



Group Home Fire and Health Inspection Protocol

July 1, 2024



The SC Office of State Fire Marshal will perform inspections of group homes upon request of DSS or approved third party providers. The scope of the inspection will be limited to the following items:

Initial Fire Code Requirements Based on Occupancy Type

A Group Home is a facility providing custodial care or a congregate living facility as defined in the SC Fire Code, Chapter 2:

Group Home	A facility for social rehabilitation, substance abuse or mental health problems that contains a group housing arrangement that provides custodial care but does not provide medical care.
Congregate Living Facility	A building or part thereof that contains sleeping units where residents share bathroom and/or kitchen facilities.
Custodial Care	Assistance with day-to-day living tasks; such as assistance with cooking, taking medication, bathing, using toilet facilities and other tasks of daily living. Custodial care includes persons receiving care who have the ability to respond to emergency situations and evacuate at a slower rate and/or who have mental and psychiatric complications.
Incapable of Self-Preservation	Persons who, because of age, physical limitations, mental limitations, chemical dependency or medical treatment, cannot respond as an individual to an emergency situation.
Sleeping Units	A single unit providing rooms or spaces for one or more persons that includes permanent provisions for sleeping and can include provisions for living, eating and either sanitation or kitchen facilities but not both. Such rooms and spaces that are also part of a dwelling unit are not sleeping units.



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Code requirements will be based on the occupancy type as defined in SC Fire Code Chapter 2, and described below

Group R-3 – Five or Fewer persons - Occupants Primarily Permanent in Nature	Care facilities within a dwelling. Care facilities for five or fewer persons receiving care that are within a single-family dwelling are permitted to comply with the <i>International Residential Code</i> provided an <i>automatic sprinkler system</i> is installed in accordance with Section 903.3.1.3 or Section P2904 of the <i>International Residential Code</i> .
NEW Group R-3 Minimum Requirements (Not to be construed as an all-inclusive list)	
SCRC R319 - Premise identification	
SCRC P2904 - Automatic Fire Sprinkler System – Required in South Carolina since 08/23/13	
SCRC R310 - Emergency Escape and Rescue openings	
SCRC R314 - Interconnected Smoke Alarms	
SCRC R315 - Carbon Monoxide Alarms	
SCRC R311 - Egress Door (readily openable from the inside without the use of key, special knowledge or effort)	
SCRC M1502 - Dryer Exhaust	
SCRC M1503 - Range Hood	

NEW Group R-4 – 6 to 16 persons – Occupants Primarily Permanent in Nature	Residential Group R-4 shall include buildings, structures or portions thereof for more than five but not more than 16 persons, excluding staff, who reside on a 24-hour basis in a supervised residential environment and receive custodial care. [...] R-4 occupancies shall meet the minimum building requirements from construction as defined for R-3, except as otherwise provided for in the <i>International Building Code</i> .	
	Condition 1	Condition 2
	Includes buildings in which all persons receiving custodial care, without any assistance , are capable of responding to an emergency situation to complete building evacuation.	Includes buildings in which there are any persons receiving custodial care who require limited verbal or physical assistance while responding to an emergency situation to complete building evacuation.



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Code Requirements:	R-4 Condition 1	R-4 Condition 2
Automatic Fire Sprinkler System	NFPA 13 D (SCFC 903.2.8.2/903.3.1.3)	NFPA 13 R (SCFC 903.2.8.3/SCFC 903.3.1.2/903.3.1.2.3) (903.4 - Monitoring)
Hardwired, Interconnected Smoke Alarms	SCFC 907.2.9.2 (2021)	
Carbon Monoxide Detection	SCFC 915	
Exit Door Operations	SCFC 1010.1.9	
Occupancy Load for One Exit	SCFC 1006.2.1 and Table 1006.2.1	
Emergency Escape and Rescue	SCFC 1030	
Portable Fire Extinguisher	SCFC 906	
Premise Identification	SCFC 505	
Emergency Access	SCFC 503	
Type I Hood	SCFC 607.2	
Fire Drills	SCFC 405	

NEW Group I-1 Minimum Requirements (Not to be construed as an all-inclusive list)		
Group I-1 – More than 16 persons.	<p>Institutional Group I-1 occupancy shall include buildings, structures or portions thereof for more than 16 persons, excluding staff, who reside on a 24-hour basis in a supervised environment and receive custodial care. Buildings of Group I-1 shall be classified as one of the occupancy conditions specified in Section 308.2.1 or 308.2.2. This group shall include, but not be limited to, the following:</p> <p>Alcohol and Drug Centers, Assisted Living facilities, Congregate Care facilities, Group Homes, Halfway Houses, Residential Board and Care facilities, Social Rehabilitation facilities</p>	
	Condition 1	Condition 2



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	Includes buildings in which all persons receiving custodial care, without any assistance , are capable of responding to an emergency situation to complete building evacuation.	Includes buildings in which there are any persons receiving custodial care who require limited verbal or physical assistance while responding to an emergency situation to complete building evacuation.
South Carolina Code of Laws §§40-3-290 or §§40-22-280 requires a design professional.		



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1. A new group home shall meet the South Carolina Building and Fire Codes adopted and enforced by the local Building and Fire Code Officials in accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws Section 6-9 as referenced above. A Certificate of Occupancy (CO) or Certificate of Completion (CC) from the local officials is required prior to the licensing inspection conducted by the SC Office of State Fire Marshal.

The follow items should then be sent to the caseworker, who should then upload the items into the Information Management System (IMS):

- 1) A copy of the Certificate of Occupancy (CO) from the local Building Official
- 2) Copies of the available permits
- 3) Cover page of the sprinkler plan

2. Existing Group homes shall comply with the requirements of the currently adopted South Carolina Fire Code.
3. The following health and sanitation requirements will be verified.
 - a. Private well water shall be negative for Coliform and E.coli.
 - b. The temperature of the potable hot water shall be between 100°F and 120°F.
 - c. If food is stored and prepared on site, refrigerators must have a thermometer and the temperature must be below 45°F. Freezers must maintain a temperature below 32°F.
 - d. If food is stored and prepared on site, a sanitizing test kit or other device that accurately measures the parts per million concentrations of the cleaning solution shall be available on site.
 - e. Pet inoculations are required for dogs, cats, and ferrets.