



## **Shelters for the Homeless or Indigent – Purpose and Scope**

The requirements contained herein are intended to provide for a minimum standard of safety for shelter occupants and each approval is unique to the specific facility, the number of permitted occupants, and the specified time period.

Shelters for the homeless or indigent may be located in existing facilities owned or operated by non-profit, religious, or public agencies classified as an A occupancy subject to approval by the Fire Marshal. A shelter may operate for not more than 180 days per calendar year for a maximum of 5 consecutive years with a maximum number of 50 individuals at any one time, not including staff.

### **Exceptions:**

1. Subject to the approval of the Building Official and Fire Marshal, the occupant load may be increased when the building is equipped with a sprinkler system throughout.
2. Subject to the approval of the Building Official and Fire Marshal, the consecutive year limit may be increased, when each of the following conditions are met:
  - The building has not fallen into a state of disrepair,
  - Fire-life safety systems and mechanical systems are maintained, and
  - The shelter has not been deemed a chronic nuisance

## **Approvals and Revocation**

No less than 45 days prior to opening a shelter, the shelter operator shall contact the Spokane Valley Fire Department (509.892.4153 | [inspections@spokanevalleyfire.com](mailto:inspections@spokanevalleyfire.com)) to arrange an on-site preliminary inspection of the proposed facility by the Fire Department.

If the onsite inspection and review determine the proposed shelter to be in compliance with the provisions outlined herein, the Fire Marshal may authorize use of the building or portion thereof as a shelter for the homeless or indigent for not longer than 180 days.

Permits may be required for any proposed modification, whether permanent or temporary, to mechanical, electrical, plumbing, building or fire elements or systems.

The following documentation shall be provided during the onsite inspection:

- A description of the use: program synopsis
- Expected number of occupants
- Hours of operation
- Emergency Plan and Shelter Policies
- Fire extinguisher locations
- Floor plan with a proposed layout of the sleeping mats

- Location of exits and egress path to such exits

**Verify all of the following and attach to the application:**

- Location in Buildings**

The Shelter must be located at the level of exit discharge.

Exceptions:

1. The shelter may be located not more than one level above or below the level of exit discharge if each sleeping room in the building is provided with at least one exterior exit directly from each sleeping room.
2. With the approval of the Fire Marshal, the shelter may be located anywhere in the building if an approved automatic sprinkler system is provided throughout the building.

- Emergency Plan and Shelter Policies**

A Shelter evacuation plan must be prepared and posted at each exit.

The operator shall provide a copy of the shelter policy and procedures of operation that at a minimum includes a security plan and addresses how ejected residents are handled. A daily registration and total count of all occupants shall be available for Fire Department rescue purposes.

- Exits**

1. Not less than 2 approved exits are required from the shelter area. The exits shall be separated by not less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  the largest diagonal of the area served, or  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the largest diagonal of the area served if the building is equipped with an automatic sprinkler system throughout.
2. Emergency lighting on battery or generator backup must be provided at each required exit door.
3. Illuminated exit sign must be provided at each required exit.

- Fire Watch and Automatic Detection**

A fire watch program must be maintained at all times when the facility is housing residents, with a log indicating that staff has inspected the premises for fire at least every 30 minutes during shelter operation.

Smoke detectors must be located throughout areas used for sleeping, adjacent perimeter spaces in the building, and along the means of egress path unless the building is equipped with an automatic fire alarm system.

Carbon monoxide detectors must be located throughout the building unless the building contains no fuel burning appliances.

□ **Separation from Hazards**

The shelter must be adequately separated from any hazards to the occupants – for example, garages, rooms containing hazardous materials, or mechanical rooms containing fuel burning appliances.

No flammable plastic, curtains, or other materials shall be used to separate individual sleeping areas.

Any quantities of combustible materials in the areas used for sleeping and egress, and areas that are atmospherically connected to those areas, shall be subject to inspection and approval on-site by the Fire Department. Materials shall meet the International Building Code flame spread and smoke-developed rating requirements when determined appropriate by the Fire Department.

□ **Shelter Staff**

Whenever the shelter is occupied, trained staff with assigned responsibilities shall be present and awake at a ratio of staff to resident of not less than 1:25.

There shall be a Point of Contact staff person available at all times the shelter is in operation. Notice shall be provided to the Fire Department prior to any changes to the Point of Contact.

□ **Cooking**

1. Except for warming of food, no cooking is allowed unless performed in a kitchen equipped with a Type I hood and duct.

□ **Candles, Smoking or Other Open Flames**

There shall be no open flames, smoking, incense, or candles in the shelter or within 25' of the shelter.

**Exceptions:**

1. Listed central heating equipment or cooking appliances,
2. As required for religious services, when continuously monitored and extinguished immediately after such services are concluded.

□ **Fire Extinguishers**

2A10BC Fire Extinguisher shall be located within 5' of each required exit and within 5' of any appliances used to warm food. If cooking occurs in kitchens equipped with a Type I hood and duct, a K class extinguisher must be provided within the kitchen.

Approval to operate the shelter may be revoked at any time for non-compliance with these provisions.