



# Commonly Found Safety Violations in Existing Tenant Spaces and Buildings

Version 2021-06-24

As a new tenant moving into an existing space, you may want to have your space inspected by a qualified individual, landlord, or the Property Manager. The purpose of the inspection is to determine if any fire, safety, or building maintenance violations exist in the space that you are going to occupy. Below is a list of the most common items found during the safety inspections conducted by County staff and may not be inclusive of every condition.

- Post the address and/or suite number of the occupancy space/building at each emergency exit door so that it is visible.
- Maintain the minimum aisle and corridor widths of 36” to 44” respectively for occupancy loads >50 and <50.
- Remove all storage from the utility closets to assure minimum working clearance for the electrical panel boards, heating and cooling equipment, and water heater.
- Verify that the exit signs and emergency egress lighting has been maintained and replace bulbs and batteries in all non-working exit signs and emergency battery packs. Check for proper illumination and operation of the system and that there are no obstructions at the ceiling lines that prevent visibility.
- Verify the exit door(s) hardware is operational. Dead bolts or padlocks are not allowed to be used on these doors. Normal operation for an exit door should not require more than one single motion to engage the latching device.
- Replace damaged/missing ceiling tiles in all areas of the space. Repair all damaged holes in the interior and exterior of the tenant space or building.
- For Assembly uses, an occupancy load card is required to be displayed in each assembly space or building area where the occupancy load is 50 or more.
- Verify that unusual ceiling/wall finishes meet the intent of the code: carpet on walls, decorations on the ceiling of combustible products, foam products exposed, etc.
- Repair all damaged or worn components, elements, and equipment in the space.
- Verify that all plumbing fixtures remain in service with access to hot and cold water and that any abandoned lines or pipes have been capped with proper materials. Water heater overflow pipe to discharge not more than 6” above floor level.
- Verify that the electrical panel board has a tight fitting cover, and install approved blanks for missing breakers. The panel board must have all breakers legibly labeled.
- Electrical extension cords are not allowed to be used in permanent applications. Surge protectors are allowed but should be properly secured and not “daisy chained” to each other.
- Verify there is a 2A:10B: C fire extinguisher with proper inspection or annual maintenance tag located at or near each exit door.
- Verify the fire suppression sprinkler heads are free from dust accumulation, grease, dirt, or paint that prevents their operation and that heads are secure at the underside of the ceiling finish. The automatic fire suppression systems also should be maintained and inspected on a regular schedule, and documentation kept on site.
- Verify that each exit door, other than the main entrance, has the wording *Emergency Exit Do Not Block* on the outside of the door face. Lettering needs to be a contrasting color, the minimum letter width is 1”, and the height is 6” minimum for each letter.
- Verify that the fire alarm systems are maintained and inspected and keep this documentation on site.
- Verify there is a permanent sign identifying the fire department connection location and the sprinkler rooms for spaces or building that are equipped with a fire suppression system.
- Verify the shelving in storage rooms does not interfere with the fire suppression system.
- For commercial occupancies with fire sprinkler systems, all areas need to be protected by a sprinkler head(s). Tenants sometimes build/remove walls and leave entire rooms or areas unprotected.
- Fire protection systems used to protect commercial cooking equipment need to be cleaned and inspected periodically. These systems should have a current maintenance inspection tag affixed to the system. Normally this is found attached to the manual activation handle for the fire suppression system and/or the container storing the fire suppression agent.
- Verify that commercial kitchen hoods are inspected and cleaned, and a current maintenance tag provided on the hood.

For questions or concerns, please contact the Department of Development Services at 703-792-6931 or the Fire Marshal Office at 703-792-6360. Please check the website at [www.pwcva.gov](http://www.pwcva.gov) for additional information. Refer to the website to examine the overview of ordinary repairs that do not require permits and inspections.