



Robert L. Quinn
Commissioner

State of New Hampshire

DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY

Division of Fire Safety

Office of the State Fire Marshal

Office: 110 Smokey Bear Boulevard, Concord, NH 03301

Mailing Address: 33 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03305

Telephone: 603-223-4289 • **Fax:** 603-223-4294

www.nh.gov/firesafety



Paul J. Parisi
State Fire Marshal

BULLETIN #	TITLE			DATE ISSUED
2020-02	Temporary/Emergency Shelters			January 16, 2020
SUPERSEDES	RELEASED BY	APPROVED BY	SOURCE	SUPERSEDED BY
	SPT	PJP	NH RSA 153, NFPA 1, NFPA 101	

Informational Bulletin 2020-02 Temporary/Emergency Shelters

Scope:

The scope of this informational bulletin is to create guidelines to ensure facilities used as temporary or emergency shelters, that are not designed or previously approved as shelters, provide a reasonable degree of life safety for the occupants.

Definitions:

Temporary/Emergency Shelter – A facility whose primary use is for something other than sheltering activities; however, from time to time may end up providing sheltering services for a limited number of persons for a pre-determined period of time.

Approval Required:

Any facility requesting use of their facility for temporary/emergency use for sheltering purposes shall apply for approval from the community in which it is being established and must meet the provisions outlined below.

The temporary/emergency shelter cannot operate without approval from the local authority having jurisdiction (Fire Chief or designee). In no case shall the approval exceed 120 days total, unless a State of Emergency has been declared by the Governor and the extended use of the shelter has been approved by the AHJ.

During the shelter activity, the notice of approval must be posted at the entrance to the facility. In addition to the posting of the approval, a sign must also be provided to indicate the dates and times of operation, the location in which occupants are being sheltered and the maximum number of occupants in the shelter. The allowable occupant load of the shelter will be determined by the AHJ at the time of request for approval and fire department review. The recommended occupant load is 1 person per 50 gross square feet.

Egress:

Any area used for sheltering and/or sleeping must have a primary and secondary means of egress that has the appropriate exit capacity in accordance with the Life Safety Code.

Emergency egress/emergency rescue openings may be required based on the shelter layout, presence of automatic sprinklers and/or exits.

The egress route must be clearly identified by exit signs and emergency lighting and maintained clear at all times the building is occupied.

Detection, Alarm and Communications Systems:

An approved automatic fire alarm system with occupant notification shall be provided throughout buildings used as a shelter unless approved by the AHJ.

Smoke alarms shall be installed in the sleeping areas.

Carbon monoxide alarms shall be installed in the sleeping areas. Carbon monoxide alarms shall be installed in areas of fuel-burning appliances.

Restrooms:

The appropriate number of restroom and bathing facilities must be provided for temporary use shelters to ensure proper hygiene. This item will be reviewed by the Local Building Department at the time of their request for approval review.

Cooking:

Cooking will only be allowed in facilities with code compliant commercial cooking facilities that are protected with hood vents and fire protection systems and have required state and local approvals for commercial cooking.

Staffing:

Shelters shall be staffed by a minimum of two awake and alert individuals when occupants are sleeping.

Emergency plans:

A Fire Safety and Evacuation Plan must be presented for review and accepted by the Local Fire Department. This plan must be available on site for review by the persons being sheltered. Evacuation routes must be clearly posted in each area being occupied by persons being sheltered. When a shelter is activated there must be a review of the fire safety and evacuation plan by all shelter staff.

The Fire Safety and Evacuation Plan shall include the following elements:

1. Emergency egress or escape routes.
2. Procedures for accounting for staff and occupants after evacuation have been completed.
3. Identification and assignment of staff responsible for rescue or emergency medical aid.
4. The preferred and any alternative means of notifying occupants of a fire or emergency.
5. The preferred and any alternative means of reporting fires and other emergencies to the fire department.
6. Identification and assignment of staff who can be contacted for further information or explanation of duties under the plan.
7. Procedures for the evacuation of any special need occupants.

These guidelines are presented for your planning purposes to insure that safety of the occupants is maintained. Other alternatives may exist and may need to be considered. If the AHJ needs assistance determining occupant load, egress requirements, etc. it is recommended that the SFMO be contacted for guidance.