



Child Care Center

State Fire Marshal's Guide to the
DSS Licensing Process



Child Care Center

- Child care centers are facilities keeping
 - 6 or more children for less than 24 hours per day
- All facilities licensed by DSS as a child care center must comply with all fire codes
 - Facilities sponsored by religious entities
 - Head Start programs
 - Kindergarten in public schools
 - Public or private child care centers



Once You Receive the DSS Child Care Center Licensing Packet

- Click on the statement that best describes your center:
 - [We are building a new building](#)
 - [We are a new owner of an existing center](#)
 - [We are adding children under 30 months of age to our existing center](#)
 - [We are increasing the number of children on our license](#)
 - [We are moving into an existing building](#)
 - [All others situations](#)



Your facility will be treated as a new building or construction

- Questions you need to answer for your Architect:
 - How many children will you keep?
 - Will you keep children under 30 months of age?
 - What are your hours of operation?
 - Will you have equipment for cooking or warming food?
- State law requires a licensed architect prepare plans for your facility
 - Select an architect with child care center experience
 - You may verify an architect's license on "Licensee Lookup"
 - <https://verify.llronline.com/LicLookup/LookupMain.aspx>
 - Select "Architects" from the drop down menu
 - Once plans are prepared:
 - The State Fire Marshal must receive one (1) set of sealed building plans
 - Submitted plans will be kept on file as a matter of public record for three (3) years



New Construction (continued)

- Your architect will determine if a fire alarm system is required:
 - You will need to hire a licensed fire alarm contractor
 - Select a contractor with child care center experience
 - You may verify the contractor’s license on “Licensee Lookup”
 - <https://verify.llronline.com/LicLookup/LookupMain.aspx>
 - Burglar/Fire Alarm And Fire Sprinklers
 - Once fire alarm shop drawings are prepared:
 - The State Fire Marshal must receive one (1) set of shop drawings
 - Submitted plans will be kept on file as a matter of public record for three (3) years



New Construction (continued)

- A commercial hood and fire suppression system is required for all daycare centers:
 - You will need to hire a licensed fire equipment dealer
 - Look in the phone book to find a list of local contractors
 - Licenses may be verified by calling the State Fire Marshal's Office (803) 896-9802
 - Select a contractor with child care center experience
 - Have your contractor coordinate with the Deputy State Fire Marshal for a hood system acceptance test



State Fire Marshal Plan Review Process

- Plans are received
 - Logged into computer tracking system
 - Assigned a project number
 - Assigned an engineering staff member to review the plans
 - Plans are reviewed in the order received
 - Initial reviews may take as long as 30 days
 - **Plans not approved on first submission**
 - The architect, Deputy State Fire Marshal, and DSS receive copies of the review letter

(click here for next steps)



When Plans Are Not Approved

- The architect/contractor must revise the plans based on the review letter
- Revised plans must be reviewed again
 - Plans are reviewed based on date received
 - Stay on top of your architect/contractor so they resubmit plans promptly
 - Be sure resubmitted plans have a response letter to State Fire Marshal's staff. Please include the SFM project number (all projects are issued a project number upon first receipt), name of facility, and street address



Construction/Renovations

- Remember to apply for local permits!
- Start building or remodeling
 - If you build before having approved plans, you build at your own risk!
- Continue with DSS on your licensing packet
- Near completion
 - Contact DSS to arrange for an inspection from a local Fire Inspector or Deputy State Fire Marshal



Before the Deputy Arrives

- Have copies of all test certificates and approved drawings
 - Fire alarm & sprinkler system (if applicable)
 - Interior furnishing (carpeting, draperies, etc)
 - Hood System Inspection report
- For new or modified fire alarm systems
 - Arrange for the fire alarm contractor to be present the day of your inspection
- Have keys to open all spaces in the facility



Inspection Day

- The Deputy will:
 - Inspect your facility
 - Review all test reports and documents
 - Review findings
 - Print and leave you a copy of the report
- If an re-inspection is needed
 - Contact the original inspector once corrections are completed
- Reports from the SFM are sent to DSS for licensing, reports from the local inspectors are the responsibility of the daycare owner to provide to DSS

Good Luck!

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Answer These Questions About Your Existing Building

- Click on the statement best describes your facility:
 - My building was a child care center before and:
 - My building was closed for 1 year or more
 - My building was closed for less than 1 year
 - My building was something besides a child care center
 - None of these apply to my center



Your Must Document Fire Code Compliance for Your Facility

- Questions you need to answer for your architect:
 - How many children will you keep?
 - Will you keep children under 30 months of age?
 - What are your hours of operation?
 - Will you have equipment for cooking or warming food?
- State law requires a licensed architect prepare plans for the renovations your facility
 - Select an architect with child care center experience (ask for references!)
 - You may verify an architect's license on "Licensee Lookup"
 - <https://verify.llronline.com/LicLookup/LookupMain.aspx>
 - Select "Architects" from the drop down menu



Fire Code Compliance Existing Facilities

- Tell your architect you will need:
 - “As-Built plans” (showing code compliance or needed renovations)
 - A code analysis of the facility for compliance with the currently adopted codes
 - The State Fire Marshal must receive one (1) set of sealed building plans (these plans will be kept on file as a matter of public record for three (3) years and will not be returned)
- Your Architect will determine if fire alarm system meets current codes or needs modification:
 - If your system needs modification, you will need to hire a licensed fire alarm contractor
 - Select a contractor with child care center experience (ask for references!)
 - You may verify the contractor’s license on “Licensee Lookup”
 - <https://verify.llronline.com/LicLookup/LookupMain.aspx>
 - Burglar/Fire Alarm And Fire Sprinklers
 - Once fire alarm shop drawings are prepared, submit one (1) set of shop drawings to the State Fire Marshal’s Office for review



Fire Code Compliance Existing Facilities (cont)

- Your architect/Deputy State Fire Marshal will determine if a commercial hood is required, meets current codes, or needs modifications :
 - If your system needs modification, you will need to hire a licensed fire equipment dealer
 - Licenses may be verified by calling the State Fire Marshal's Office (803) 896-9802
 - Select a contractor with child care center experience
 - Have your contractor coordinate with the Deputy State Fire Marshal for a hood system acceptance test



Fire Code Compliance Existing Facilities (cont)

- When your architect completes the drawings:
 - The State Fire Marshal must receive one (1) set of sealed plans. These plans will **not** be returned. These plans will be kept on file as a matter of public record for three (3) years.

(click here for next steps)



All Other Questions

- I have a question concerning DSS Licensing:
 - Increasing the number children on your license
 - To schedule a fire inspection

(click here)
- I have a question about the fire codes
(click here)



DSS Licensing Question

Please contact (803) 898-9020

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Fire Code Questions

- Please contact the State Fire Marshal's Office @ (803) 896-9800
 - Ask for a member of the engineering staff for code or technical questions
 - Ask for the State Fire Marshal for other questions
 - Click the link below to view the State Fire Marshal's web site
 - <http://www.llr.state.sc.us/firemarshal.asp>
- (Restart slide show)