



UNDERSTANDING THE REGULATIONS:



What Alaskan Foster Parents Need to Know

#10

Fire Safety, First Aid and Emergency Preparedness In the Foster Home (12/1/06)

1.0 Hour Training Credit



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(Updated 12/1/06)

NOTE: The State of Alaska Department of Health and Human Services revised and combined the regulations for all licensed facilities, including licensed foster homes. The Environmental Health and Safety Regulations took effect on June 23, 2006. This self study reviews a highlight of the regulations that impact licensed foster homes.

Fire Safety, First Aid, and Emergency Preparedness In the Foster Home

AUTHORITY: 7 AAC 10.1010 Life and Fire Safety
7 AAC 10.1075 First Aid Kit and Procedures

This series was compiled with assistance from the State of Alaska Office of Children's Services to help foster parents understand the foster care regulations. This series is a guide to the regulations, but is not a substitute. In all discrepancies between the information in this series and the regulations, the regulations and the statutes are the final authority. Contact your licensing worker for a complete copy of the regulations.

INTRODUCTION: The health and safety of children in foster care is of utmost importance. Preparing for unexpected events such as natural disasters, fire and physical injury is an important part of keeping children safety. This self-study looks at several areas of safety including: **Fire Safety Requirements, Emergency Preparedness, Evacuation Plans and First Aid Kits.**



FIRE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Of course, prevention is the best way to go! The regulations have some guidelines for what is needed in terms of safety equipment and physical space requirements to help prevent a disaster in the first place.

- *If your home uses oil, wood, natural gas or propane as a heating or cooking fuel, you need to install an operating carbon monoxide detector within each sleeping area or no more than three feet from the entrance to that area and regularly inspect and test it. If your residence is multi-leveled, you need at least one operating carbon monoxide detector on each level of your home.*

- *Your home must have two means of emergency escape that are away from each other. Means of escape include doors and windows meeting current building codes. If six or more children are in care, a single level home must have two exits away from each other.*
- *If children play regularly in a basement or sleep in a basement, there needs to be a means of escape to outside the house from the ground level.*
- *Each child's sleeping room should have an operable window providing escape to outside the house.*
- *If a window is one of the means of escape in a foster home, it needs to meet current building codes. The sill height must not be higher than 44 inches off the floor, and there needs to be 5.7 square feet of net clear openable area with minimums for height and width. These guidelines follow fire safety standards that demand that there needs to be enough room for a firefighter with equipment to be able to get through the window when open or broken.*
- *In a foster home that cares for six or more children, additional fire safety precautions (such as a fire inspection) may be required. The home needs to comply with the fire safety requirements of the local government or state fire marshal requirements. Licensing can also request an inspection for homes with fewer than six children if determined to be needed.*

Foster homes should follow good fire safety practices. Regulations specify that foster homes:

- *Have a working smoke detector in each bedroom and at least one on every floor. Smoke detectors should be no more than ten years old.*
- *Have a fully charged fire extinguisher (2A:10BC) properly installed on each level of the house.*
- *Store flammable or combustible liquids in containers with tight fitting lids and out of the reach of children.*
- *Be careful with heating appliances. Keep them working well. Vent all smoke and gas to outside of the house. Do not locate heating appliances in exit ways, hallways, and sleeping areas (unless your home does not have separate sleeping rooms). Portable heating devices should have a tip-over switch and should be kept out of the reach of children.*



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND DISASTER EVACUATION PLAN

The licensing regulations address not only planning for a fire emergency, but also for other emergency situations or natural disasters as well that may affect your home, including as appropriate, tsunami, cold weather, flooding and earthquake emergencies.

If an emergency affects your home, you should notify your licensing worker by phone, fax or email no later than the following working day and submit a detailed written report to the department within five days. The report should include date and time of the emergency, description of the emergency, and a description and evaluation of how you evacuated your home.

Evacuation Drills:

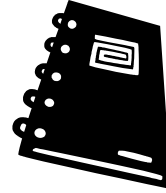
A foster home must have an emergency evacuation plan. This means that you must plan for how you would be able to get your family members out of your home within 150 seconds, including children with limited mobility.

- Evacuation drills should be practiced with family members at once a month unless bad weather prevents the drill. If the children in care are 12 years and older and have practiced the drill at least three times, fire drills can be practiced once every three months.
- Document your evacuation drills. A sample **"FIRE DRILL REPORT"** is included in the supplement to this course. A **"GET OUT ALIVE! A FIRE ESCAPE PLANNER"** is also included.
- Practice your evacuation drills regularly. Older children should know how to get out of the house. Agree on a meeting place outside the house. With young children, adults are responsible for their safety and for getting them out safe. This is especially important for children with special needs or for babies.
- With a child under 30 months with special needs (such as deafness or in a wheel chair or crib bound), you need to specify how you will evacuate that child. Determine in advance who is able to carry the child; how the wheelchair be wheeled out of the house; or, where the accessible exits are located.

Keep a Record of All Your Drills!

Licensed foster parents should make and retain a record of each required evacuation drill and make the record available to your licensing worker upon request. The record must include:

1. The date and time of the drill
2. The name of all the people and children present at the time of the drill
3. Who was present at the drill but did not participate and why
4. The amount of time require to complete the drill
5. A brief evaluation of how the drill went



Preparedness Plans For Other Emergencies

There are other emergencies that Alaska household may face. These might include earthquakes, or for coastal communities, tsunamis, or for northern communities, extreme cold. Families should develop disaster plans so everyone knows what to do. Your evacuation drill for fires may help if you need to get out of the house quickly. But help your children know the differences between what to do in an earthquake as opposed to what to do when the house is on fire.



The following guidelines do not come from the regulations but come from:
In Case Of An Earthquake From the University of Alaska Fairbanks Seagrant. More information can be found at <http://seagrant.uaf.edu/features/earthquake/index.html>.

What to do during an earthquake

1. **If you are indoors**, duck or drop down to the floor. Take cover under a sturdy desk, table or other furniture. Hold on to it and be prepared to move with it. Hold the position until the ground stops shaking and it is safe to move. Stay clear of windows, fireplaces, woodstoves, and heavy furniture or appliances that may fall over. Stay inside to avoid being injured by falling glass or building parts. If you are in a crowded area, take cover where you are. Stay calm and encourage others to do likewise.
2. **If you are outside**, get into the open, away from buildings and power lines.
3. **If you are driving**, stop if it is safe, but stay inside your car. Stay away from bridges, overpasses and tunnels. Move your car as far out of the normal traffic pattern as possible. If possible, avoid stopping under trees, light posts, power lines, or signs.

4. **If you are in a mountainous area**, or near unstable slopes or cliffs, be alert for falling rock and other debris that could be loosened by the earthquake.
5. **If you are at the beach**, move quickly to higher ground or several hundred yards inland.

If you live along the coast, be alert for news of tsunami warnings issued by the Alaska Tsunami Warning Center. If you experience a strong earthquake, there may not be time to issue a warning. Move to higher ground as soon as you are able, and stay there until the authorities issue an "all clear."



DISASTER KIT

In addition to our first aid kit, a foster home should also put together a disaster kit. This is a must for any Alaska home that faces snow, cold, potential earthquake or storm. Your disaster kit should include:

1. At least one flash light and batteries
2. At least one battery operated radio and batteries
3. Potable water
4. Nonperishable food
5. Blankets

Also, talk to your children about what you want them to do if a disaster happens and your family members are not together. Give them instructions about what you want them to do and where the family should meet up.

NOTE: See the Alaska Center for Resource Families **INFORMATION PACKET: Emergency Preparedness for Resource Families** for more information on developing a Emergency Preparedness Plan for your family.



FIRST AID KIT

The regulations specify that every foster home needs to have a first aid kit at home and one for extended outings from your home. The at-home and in-the-car first aid kits should both include:

- Disposable nonporous, non-latex gloves
- Sealed packages of alcohol wipes or antiseptic for thermometer cleaning only
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- One thermometer
- Adhesive bandages
- Bandage tape
- Sterile gauze pads
- Flexible roller gauze
- Triangular bandages
- Safety pins
- An eye dressing
- A note pad with a pen or pencil
- Activated charcoal
- A cold pack
- First aid guide (American Academy of Pediatrics or Red Cross)
- CPR barrier device or mask
- Poison Control Center phone number
- Potable water
- Splints, including small child-size splints
- Soap
- Working flashlight

You also need to assemble a simpler first aid kit for outings. This kit should include:

- Disposable nonporous, non-latex gloves
- Tweezers
- Adhesive bandages
- Bandage tape
- Sterile gauze pads
- Cold pack
- CPR barrier device or mask
- Potable water
- Any medication needed on the walk
- Emergency Child Information such as a copy of the Consent Form for Emergency or Routine Medical Care and any emergency contact information specific to the child.

Put this in a fanny pack, back pack, or easily carried container to take with you on trips or outings.

For more information about the **UNDERSTANDING THE REGULATIONS: *What Alaskan Foster Parents Need to Know*** series, contact the Alaska Center for Resource Families at 1-800-478-7307. In Fairbanks/North Pole, call 479-7307.

FORMS RELATED TO FIRE SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IN THE FOSTER HOME

Included in this section is a copy of the following forms:

Fire Drill Log

Fire Escape Planner

Get Out Alive! A Fire Escape Planner

This is your fire escape planner. If a fire starts, smoke and heat can kill you unless you plan in advance to escape quickly. You may have only several minutes to reach safety. Everyone needs to know how to get out so they can act quickly and without panic.

Your fire safety plan requires:

- Smoke detector on each level of your home.
- Fire extinguisher on each level of your home.
- Escape routes marked on a floor plan
- Specified meeting place outside your home.
- Plan to evacuate everyone in 150 seconds, including children who can't get out by themselves.
- Practice your escape plan monthly. Practice at different times of the day and using alternate exits.

Sample Escape Plan

