

Certificate of Inspection Guide/Explanations

(1) Why are these required?

State Building Code: MA 780 CMR 110.7

The *building official* shall inspect periodically existing buildings and structures and parts thereof in accordance with Table 110 entitled Schedule for Periodic Inspections of Existing Buildings. Such buildings shall not be occupied or continue to be occupied without a valid Certificate of Inspection. Periodic inspections required by this section do not apply to residences operated or licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services and subject to 780 CMR One- and Two-family Dwellings.

NOTE: This does apply to all 3-families and above

Table 110 Schedule for Periodic Inspection of Existing Buildings

(See Chapters 3: *Use and Occupancy Classification* and 4: *Special Detailed Requirements Based on Use and Occupancy* for complete descriptions of use groups.)

Use Group	Use Group	Use Group Description	Minimum Inspections	Maximum Certification Period
A-1	Movie theaters or theaters for performing acts (stage and scenery)	> 400 occupant load	Semi - annual	One year
		<= 400 occupant load	Semi - annual	One year
A-2	Restaurants, Night Clubs or similar uses	> 400 occupant	Semi -annual ¹	One year
		<= 400 occupant	Annual ¹	One year

A-3	Lecture halls, dance halls, churches and places of religious worship, recreational centers, terminals, etc.	> 400 occupant load <= 400 occupant load	Semi -annual Annual	One year One year
A-4	Low density recreation and similar uses.		see note 3.	Five years
A	Special amusement buildings or portions thereof.		see note 3.	One year
E	Educational, day care		see note 3.	One year
I-1	Group home		see note 3.	One year
I-2	Residents incapable of self preservation - hospitals, nursing home, mental hospitals, certain day care facilities.		see note 3.	Two years ²
I-3	Residents restrained - prisons, jails, detention centers, etc.		see note 3.	Two years
I-4	Adult and/or child day care facilities.		see note 3.	One year
R-1	Hotels, motels, boarding houses, etc.		see note 3.	One year
R-1	Detoxification facilities		see note 3.	Two years
R-2	Multi-family		see note 3.	Five years
R-2	Dormitories and R-2 Congregate Living		see note 3	One year
R-2	Summer Camps for children.		Annual	One year
R-3	Residential facilities licensed by DDS or		Annual	One year

DMH

R-4	Residential care/assisted living facilities (≤ 16 persons)	Annual	One year
Any	Facilities licensed by the Alcohol Beverage Control Commission where alcoholic beverages are served and consumed.	Annual ⁴ as per M.G.L. c. 10, § 74	One year as per M.G.L. c. 10, § 74
Any	House museums (see Chapter 34: <i>Existing Structures</i> for definition)	Annual	One year
Any	Fire escapes, etc. per Chapter 10: <i>Means of Egress</i>	Five years	Five years

Notes:

1. When appropriate for A-2 uses, the inspection for the Certificate of Inspection should include and be timed to satisfy the requirements of M.G.L. c. 10, § 74.
2. One year for facilities licensed or operated by the Department of Mental Health (DMH).
3. Prior to issuance of new certificate.
4. Certificates of inspection for establishments intending to sell alcoholic beverages to be consumed on the premises shall be governed by M.G.L. c. 10, § 74 and the inspection schedule in section 110.7. The *building official* may issue a temporary inspection certificate, once co-signed by the *building official* and by the head of the fire department, effective to a date certain for the establishment.

General Note: It is the responsibility of building "owner", as defined in Chapter 2: *Definitions*, to meet the inspection requirements in this table for continued use and occupancy. The maximum certification period specified in the table is intended to provide administrative flexibility. For uses allowing more than one year maximum certification period, the *permit* may determine the certificate validity term. For example, an R-2 building could be certified for one, two, three, four or five years.

(2) How do I apply?

Use the following link to get an application:

<https://www.holyoke.org/documents/certificate-of-inspection-application/>

What should property owners expect?

Question 1:

Monitored fire alarm systems are only required for buildings with 6 units or more and/or is a mixed use building (i.e. some commercial and some residential). There are some exceptions to this rule such as appropriate fire separation. Residential buildings only with 3-5 units are not required to have monitored systems so the applicant can check no and move on. If the applicant believes their 6+ unit is exempt they can also check no and the reasons for that exemption can be discussed with a building official. If there is a monitored alarm system in place a full inspection report from a licensed/qualified vendor indicating any/all deficiencies have been addressed is to be submitted with the application for building official review.

Question 2:

Sprinkler systems in existing buildings are only applicable for larger buildings (typically 10+ units) unless there is a major modification that triggers the requirement, or if a liquor license is involved (bar, night club, restaurant, etc.) Please reference Table 903.2 of the following to review that requirement:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/780-cmr-ninth-edition-chapter-9-fire-protection-systems-amendments/download>

For the vast majority of existing, non-conforming buildings in the city the applicant can check no. If there is a sprinkler system in place a complete test report indicating all deficiencies have been addressed and corrected should be included with the application for building official review.

NOTE: For those property owners that need the systems above and intend to comply we can issue temporary certificates (typically 1 year) while the work is being scheduled and completed. A signed contract for the services is required to obtain the temp certificate.

Question 3:

If there are any exterior components of egress (i.e. an exit from an apartment that leads to or from a porch of some kind with stairs that lead to the exit discharge (ground level typically) then that component needs to be tested and certified by a registered design professional (engineer, architect, etc.) This includes porches, decks, fire escapes, etc.) If all egress components are internal then this question does not apply. If internal stairs from an upper level lead to a door that exits onto a porch system that then leads to the ground then that porch would need to be tested and certified. We have a list of suggested professionals as well as to the state registries on the website:

<https://www.holyoke.org/documents/periodic-inspections-required-for-occupancy-3-16/>

Here is an example of the egress affidavit required by the department:

<https://storage.googleapis.com/proudcity/holyokema/uploads/2020/03/MEANS-OF-EGRESS-AFFIDAVIT.pdf>

NOTE: Exterior component includes porches that are not within the building “envelope”, i.e. heated components of the house. An exterior porch that was at some point enclosed but not heated is not excluded from this requirement



A photo summarizing why this is important the concern of emphasis every building official regarding this requirement:



This was taken after the failure of an exterior egress during an emergency escape situation on a component that was never tested and failed.

Question 4:

All buildings 3-family and above need emergency lighting/exit signs in any egress component shared by more than one tenant. For example, a set of stairs from a 3rd floor apartment all the way to the ground level that is also utilized by other tenants needs to be illuminated for the entire path of travel for a minimum of 90 minutes upon power failure. The code reference for this requirement is here:

https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/IBC2015NY/chapter-10-means-of-egress#IBC2015_Ch10_Sec1008



At the base of those stairs where the exit door is reached there needs to be an illuminated exit sign as well (can be illuminated by the emergency light itself). There are combo units that satisfy both requirements.



(3) Now that I have submitted my application with all appropriate documentation, now what should I expect?

A building official will contact you to schedule an on-site inspection. The official will be checking for proper size and properly secured handrails, working and up-to-date smoke and CO detectors, checking mechanical areas for proper clearances, ensuring clear paths of egress, etc. The official will be utilizing a checklist or more than 40 reviews covering conditions, doors, exits, stairs, lighting, detection, fire protection and boilers/furnaces. Access to individual apartments is not necessary, only common areas and all mechanical areas.

Yes:



No:



Yes:



No:



Once the inspection is completed and passed, the building official will fill out the appropriate paperwork and send you a certificate for you to keep for your records. As stated in the original code reference it is your responsibility to ensure that prior to the expiration on that certificate you complete a new application to repeat the process.

Any questions ever please contact a building official at 413-322-5600