



NEW BUSINESS INSPECTION

SCOPE

This publication outlines the Fire Prevention Code requirements involving a New Business Inspection conducted by the Fire Marshal’s Office. This document provides guidance on the process of setting up the inspection, along with common code violations noted during the inspection.

OVERVIEW

Upon approval of a Zoning Use Permit (ZUP) application by the Zoning Administrator, including a business license, the Fire Marshal’s office will receive a notification of the proposed business and location. The business will either be notified or, the business can notify the Fire Marshal’s office of intended opening date. The New Business fire inspection shall be conducted within **10 business days after** the business opens. This ensures the business is inspected in its intended permanent operation and the full spectrum of the operations can be observed.

INSPECTION PROCESS

After the business has been scheduled for a New Business inspection, an inspector from the Fire Marshal’s Office will conduct the inspection and issue an invoice. If any violations of the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code and/or Winchester City Code are noted, a Notice of Violation will be issued to the responsible party of the business and a reinspection will be scheduled. To avoid additional fees associated with the reinspection, **all** violations must be corrected by the scheduled reinspection date. Typically, the reinspection date is two weeks from the initial inspection. For each reinspection conducted after the first reinspection, fees will be assessed based on the table below. If the business continues to fail to correct the noted violations, criminal charges may be pressed.

INSPECTION FEES

Effective July 1, 2023, an invoice will be issued according to the following fee schedule.

NEW BUSINESS INSPECTION FEES	REINSPECTION FEES
Up to 2,500 sq. ft. - \$50	1 st Reinspection - \$0
2,501 to 5,000 sq. ft. - \$70	2 nd Reinspection - \$100
5,001 to 12,000 sq. ft. - \$100	3 rd Reinspection - \$150
12,001 to 50,000 sq. ft. - \$150	4 th Reinspection or More - \$200
Over 50,0000 sq. ft. - \$250	

COMMON VIOLATIONS FOUND

- Address numbers not placed on the business that can be seen from the street.
- Extension cords used as permanent wiring.
- Extension cords routed through ceiling or walls.
- Electric receptacles and open junction boxes missing cover plates.
- Storage within 30 inches of an electrical panel.
- Electrical panels missing labels on the breakers.
- Power strips daisy chained or plugged in to other power strips.
- Fire Extinguishers not provided for the business by a certified service provider.
- Fire extinguishers not properly mounted and near an exit/path of egress.
- Storage or obstructions blocking emergency exits.
- Emergency exits being locked with non-compliant hardware during occupancy.
- Combustible storage in electrical rooms or boiler/mechanical rooms.
- Storage within 18 inches of a sprinkler head or ceiling line.
- Storage in the Fire Alarm or Sprinkler room.
- Exit signs not illuminating when the power is turned off.
- Emergency lights not illuminating when the power is turned off.
- Fire doors held open with door stops that prevent the doors from closing.
- Ceiling tiles missing or openings/holes in drywall.
- Flammable liquids and fuel powered equipment stored indoors or improperly.
- Fire Alarm system not serviced within the past year by a certified service provider.
- Sprinkler System not serviced within the past year by a certified service provider.
- Material Safety Data Sheets not kept or accessible on site for all chemicals stored.
- No emergency or contingency plan in place based on the business type.