Martin County Fire Rescue Department
Fire Prevention Bureau

Martin County Fire Prevention Bureau executes many tasks within the community to protect our businesses, residents and visitors from fire and explosion. This is accomplished through code compliant plan review for new construction, new business inspections, periodic inspections of existing businesses, public education, fire hydrant flows and “cause and origin” investigations of fires.

The State of Florida and Martin County have adopted the Florida Fire Prevention Code which consists of National Fire Protection Association Uniform Fire Code (NFPA 1) and the Life-Safety Code (NFPA 101), and all referenced Codes and Standards. Martin County Fire Prevention ensures code compliance in commercial structures and multi-family residential structures, but does not have jurisdiction in the construction of one- and two-family dwellings.

Construction requirements vary according to the occupancy and use of the building as determined by the architect and engineer to meet the building owner’s needs. The responsibility of the Fire Prevention Bureau is to ensure the submitted plans are code compliant. Below is a breakdown of the responsibilities that fall under the Fire Prevention Bureau:

- **New development plan review**
  The Bureau is involved in the early stages of review for all new commercial construction and residential developments. During development review we ensure emergency vehicle access, the availability of water for fire hydrants and required fire protection systems, and access to the proposed buildings prior to construction.

- **Life safety review for construction**
  The Bureau is involved in the plan review of all commercial and multifamily buildings. The Bureau works closely with architects, engineers, and contractors to insure that Life Safety Requirements are met, and that the proper inspections take place during the new construction phase. The Prevention Bureau inspects all construction for compliance prior to a Certificate of Occupancy being issued.

- **New building Inspections**
  - **Egress**
    - Exits shall remain clear and unobstructed at all times.
    - Exit signs, where required or existing, are required to be functioning.
    - Emergency lights, where required or existing, are required to be functioning.
    - Exterior exit door locks shall not require the use of a key or any special knowledge or effort for operation from the egress side.
  - **Extinguishers**
    - Fire extinguishers must be of the proper size and type for the occupancy. A minimum of 2A:10BC is required for a business office and currently tagged by a State licensed fire extinguisher company. They must be serviced annually and retagged by a State licensed fire extinguisher company in accordance with NFPA 10. Extinguishers must be mounted, in plain view, and must be within 75 ft. of travel distance from any point in the building.
  - **General requirements**
    - Emergency forces access is required for all commercial structures and multi-family residential properties. Martin County utilizes Knox access systems. This includes automatic gates and access to all structures. Contact Fire Prevention for details at (772) 288-5633.
- Correct address must be posted in the front and rear of the business.
- Address numbers are to be a minimum of 6”, in a contrasting color, and be in plain view. Buildings which are more than 50’ from the roadway will require numbers on a sign or marquee at the roadway.
- Occupant load must be posted in plain view for all assembly occupancies.
- Housekeeping must be in order, including the proper storage of flammable and combustible products. If hazardous materials are stored in the building proper labeling will be required in accordance with NFPA 704M.
- Firewall separations must be intact.

**Fire Sprinkler Systems**
- Where required or already existing, all required systems are to be in compliance and inspected by a State licensed contractor in accordance with NFPA 25.
- The Fire Department Connection (FDC) must be visible and unobstructed.

**Fire Alarm Systems**
- Where required, or already existing, all required systems are too be in compliance and inspected by a State licensed contractor in accordance with NFPA 72.

**Hood and suppression systems**
- Where existing or required for all commercial cooking operations are to be in compliance and all required inspections are to be conducted by a State licensed contractor in accordance with NFPA 96.

**Electric**
- The electrical panel must be free from obstruction. All breakers are to be identified and labeled.
- Proper covers are to be on all outlets and switches.
- Wiring is to be in conduit and extension cords cannot be used in place of permanent wiring.
- The tenant or property owner is responsible for maintaining compliance of all life safety systems.

**Existing business periodic inspections**
- The Fire Prevention Code requires all existing buildings to be inspected on a periodic basis. Fire Prevention will inspect all State licensed facilities annually according to the licensing requirements. All other properties will be inspected according to the occupancy and use of the property. Fire Prevention Inspectors will inspect the properties within their jurisdiction. The inspection criteria will be similar to the new business inspection.
- The most common violations found on Periodic Inspections are: Exits blocked from overstocking and new deliveries, electrical panels are blocked and combustible storage in found in the electrical rooms, extension cords are used improperly and excessive use of multi-outlet strips, fire sprinkler risers and equipment are blocked, vehicles parked in designated fire lines, and rack storage exceeds 12 feet (If building has fire sprinklers, storage must be 18” below the fire sprinklers. If no sprinklers are present, storage must be 24” from the ceiling.)
- These code requirements are enforced to protect the business owner, employees, visitors and the fire rescue personnel who are responding to an emergency at your place of business. It is our objective to educate property owners on how to keep their facilities in compliance.

**Public Education and Questions by the Public**
The Fire Prevention Bureau is available to provide fire and life safety information to home owner associations, schools, clubs and the general public. Contact our office at (772)288-5633.
• Fire Investigations
  o Martin County Fire Prevention Bureau takes the lead in determining cause and origin of structure fires, vehicle fires and any type of suspicious fire in Martin County. The Florida Fire Service is responsible for investigating outdoor fires wild land fires. We work in conjunction with the Florida State Fire Marshal’s office and the Martin County Sheriff’s office when we determine a fire to be suspicious or intentional. With the cooperation and outstanding team work of these agencies, we have successfully prosecuted multiple criminals who commit arson in Martin County. Most fires are unintentional and we assist these residents by notifying the American Red Cross, who provides assistance when residents are displaced by fire. We provide a timely fire investigation report to expedite assistance by their insurance company.
  o The Martin County Fire Prevention Bureau exists to educate and protect our residents and businesses from fire and explosion. If you need additional information please contact our office at (772) 288-5633.