

UNDERSTANDING THE REGULATIONS:

What Alaskan Foster Parents Need to Know

TOPIC: #10 Fire Safety, First Aid, and Emergency Preparedness In the Foster Home

7 AAC 67.303 Life and Fire Safety

7 AAC 67.335 First Aid Kit and Procedures

7 AAC 67.305 Heating and Heating Devices

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.

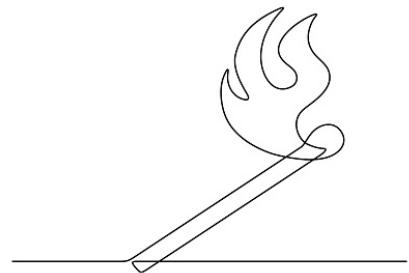
INTRODUCTION: The health and safety of children in foster care is of utmost importance. Preparing for unexpected events such as natural disasters, fire and physical injury is an important part of keeping children safety. This self-study looks at several areas of safety including: **Fire Safety Requirements,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

WHAT DO THE REGULATIONS SAY...

About 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. Based on the home inspection, your licensing specialist may also request that there is an inspection by local or state authorities. The foster home is responsible for any charge for such an inspection.

- *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 not more than 3 feet from the entrance and regularly inspect, test and service 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 remote from each other and provide unobstructed access to the outside of the building. Means of escape must include at least 1 exterior door and windows that provides escape directly to the outside.*



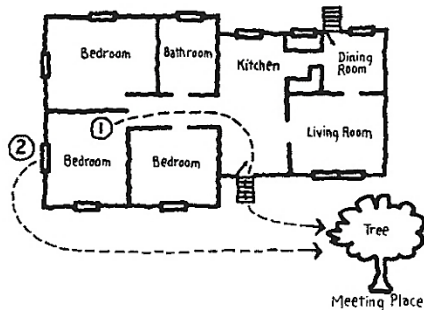
- *If children occupy a basement for any part of the day, there needs to be a means of escape to outside the house from the ground level.*
- *Each child's sleeping room should have an operable window providing escape to outside the house.*
- *If a window is one of the means of escape in a foster home, 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.*

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 dry chemical fire extinguisher (2A:10BC) strategically located on each level of your home.*
- *Store flammable or combustible liquids in containers with tight fitting lids designed for holding flammable or combustible liquids and out of the reach of children.*
- *The home and premises should be kept free of combustible waste materials and other fire hazards.*
- *Be careful with heating appliances. Keep them working well. Vent all smoke and gas to outside of the house. Make sure that the device is equipped with protective devices if the heating device presents a hazard because of an exposed flame or heating element. If children in care are under six years of age or have limitations that pose a risk of injury, heat sources must be shielded in a manner that prevents burn injury and the shield must be far enough from the heat source to prevent it from smoldering or burning. 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.*
- *Not use open flame heaters, except for a fireplace that complies with applicable municipal building codes, and ensure the use of a protective screen.*
- *Foster homes should also ensure that the room temperature in the home is maintained at and adjusted as needed for the majority of the children in care to be comfortable.*

WHAT DO THE REGULATIONS SAY...

Emergency Preparedness and Emergency Evacuation Plans?



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, tsunamis, 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 no later than the following working day.

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:

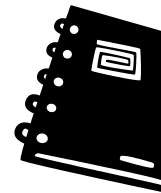
A foster home must have an emergency evacuation plan. This means that you must plan for how you would be able to get your family members out of your home within 3 minutes, including children with limited mobility.

- Evacuation drills should be practiced with all family members at least once a month. Children whose medical or physical condition may be compromised by an emergency evacuation drill do not need to participate, however, the caregiver must still review the specialized plan procedures for these children before or after the drill so they are aware of how they would be evacuated from the home in an emergency.
- Document your evacuation drills. A sample “**EMERGENCY EVACUATION LOG**” 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.
- For a child under 30 months, a youth with limited mobility, or a youth with special needs (such as mental, visual, or hearing impairment), you need to specify how you will evacuate that child. Determine in advance who is able to carry the child or guide them; 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 caregivers and initials of all children present at the time of the drill
3. The amount of time required to complete the drill
4. A brief evaluation of how the drill went



A sample **“EMERGENCY EVACUATION LOG”** is included in the supplement to this course

DISASTER KIT

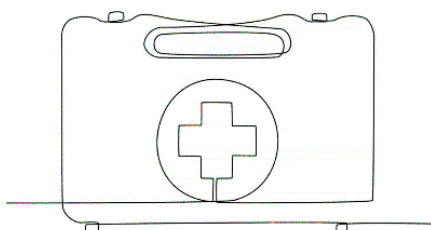
According to regulations, every foster home should have a maintained a disaster kit. This is a must for any Alaska home that faces snow, cold, potential earthquake or storm. Your disaster kit should include:

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

When planning for what you need, think about what it would take if your family was on their own for 5 to 7 days. 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. [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) is a great site for lots of ideas of how to get ready to stay safe during emergencies. Foster parents should regularly update your Emergency Response Plan Form on file with licensing so OCS has current information about how you can be reached during an emergency.

FIRST AID KIT

The regulations specify that every foster home needs to have at least one first aid kit in the home. You should post emergency telephone numbers near your phone for easy reference and include information for the nearest poison control center. You should have at least one first aid kit for home. The at-home kit should include:



Bandage)

- Disposable nonporous, non-latex gloves
- Sealed packages of alcohol wipes or antiseptic
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- A thermometer
- Bandages
- Non-latex elastic bandage (like an Ace
- Sterile gauze

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:
WHAT TO DO DURING AND AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE from the University of Alaska Fairbanks Alaska Earthquake Center. More information can be found at <http://earthquake.alaska.edu/keep-safe>.

During an earthquake:

If you are indoors, drop, cover, and hold. Take cover under a desk or table and hold onto it until the shaking stops. Avoid glass that might shatter and heavy objects that might fall on you. If you can't get under a table or desk, crouch against a sturdy wall in a place where nothing heavy is above you and no windows are nearby.

If you are in a crowded area, stay calm and take cover where you are. Encourage others to do the same.

If you are outside, get into the open, away from buildings and power lines.

If you are driving, pull over and stop if it is safe, but stay inside your car. Try not to stop under trees, light posts, power lines, or signs. Avoid bridges, overpasses and tunnels.

If you are near the ocean, move quickly to higher ground or move several hundred yards inland.

If you are in the mountains or near unstable slopes, be alert for falling rock, snow, and other debris that could be loosened by the earthquake.

After an earthquake:

If you live along the coast, move to higher ground and stay there until the authorities issue an "all clear." Be alert for tsunami warnings, but if you experience a strong earthquake, there may not be time for a warning to be issued.

Check for injuries. Do not move a seriously injured person unless they are in immediate danger of further injuries.

Check for damage. Shut off the main gas valve only if a leak is suspected. Check oil and propane tanks including supports, pipes, and hoses. Shut off the power to your house if you suspect wiring is damaged.

Avoid downed power lines. Stay away from downed lines even if power appears to be off.

Remember that more earthquakes will follow a large earthquake. Some aftershocks may be large enough to do additional damage to weakened structures.

Practice Tip: Participating in earthquake drills at home and at school will help your family to react quickly and correctly when the shaking starts. The Great Alaska ShakeOut is an excellent resource for earthquake drills and preparedness information.

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

Supplement to First Aid, Emergencies and Fires in the series **UNDERSTANDING THE REGULATIONS: *What Alaskan Foster Parents Need to Know*** written by the Alaska Center for Resource Families.

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

Emergency Evacuation Log

Fire Escape Planner

Emergency Response Plan Form

Emergency and Damage Property Forms

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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.