

Temporary Use of Non-residential Buildings to House Volunteers  
Outline of Fire Safety Requirements

1. An application for a fire safety permit and a written plan will need to be submitted to the local Fire Official. The application must include the location, name and contact information of the responsible party, the date(s) when the building will be used to house volunteers, the number of volunteers to be housed, including the number and ages of volunteers who are under the age of 18, if any. A floor plan sketch of the building showing the location(s) where volunteers will sleep, the other spaces to be made available to the volunteers and the *exit access* from each space (exit access is the area that will be traveled to arrive at the exterior exit door or rated enclosure.) This floor plan does not need to be to scale or professionally prepared.
2. Fire drills: A fire drill must be conducted on the first day of occupancy by a given group of volunteers. The fire drill must be repeated each time there is a changeover in the volunteers being housed. The fire drill must include gathering at a designated spot outside the building and taking attendance to ensure all volunteers have evacuated safely. A record of all such fire drills must be maintained and must be made available to the local fire official upon request.
3. Supervision: There must be one person remaining awake overnight in any building being used to house volunteers. When volunteers under the age of 18 are being housed, there must be at least two persons providing overnight supervision. (Note: The person(s) assigned to stay overnight are to ensure the safety of the volunteers in the event of a fire or other emergency in the building. Adequate supervision for any minors being housed will be the responsibility of the volunteer group involved.) The hosting facility shall train the person or persons assigned. They must be familiar with the evacuation procedure to be followed in an emergency, with the building layout and with the fire detection or suppression systems, if any, and must be capable of notifying the fire department in the event of an emergency. Emergency numbers, including numbers for those responsible for the facility, must be posted in a conspicuous location. The person or persons assigned must have a record of the names of all volunteers being housed on a given night.
4. Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms: Each sleeping room must have battery-powered smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms. The smoke alarms must be installed in the sleeping room(s) and throughout the exit access leading to the required exit or exits.

All smoke alarms must be maintained in accordance with the State Fire Prevention Code (N.J.A.C. 5:70-3) Section 907.21. Monthly tests must be conducted for other than battery powered smoke alarms and weekly tests must be conducted for battery powered smoke alarms. A log must be kept on site documenting the required testing. When smoke alarms are installed with 9 volt batteries, the batteries must be replaced annually.

Buildings with automatic fire alarm systems with complete smoke detection installed meet the requirement for smoke alarms.

5. Exits: Each sleeping room must have at least two means of egress (exits). The main means of egress must be a door of not less than 32 inches in width. The second means of egress may be an emergency egress window or a door that goes to the exterior of the building. An emergency egress window must have a sill height of not more than 44 inches and a minimum opening of 5.7 square feet measured from head to sill and side to side. The minimum width must be 20 inches and the height must be at least 24 inches. There are two conditions when a second means of egress is not required: (1) When the sleeping room is served by an exit door that goes into a corridor that provides access to two remote exits; or (2) When the building is protected throughout by an automatic fire sprinkler system.
6. Location of sleeping rooms: Sleeping rooms must be located at the level of exit discharge unless the building is equipped throughout with an automatic fire alarm system. Sleeping in a basement is not permitted unless the building is equipped throughout with an automatic fire sprinkler system.
7. Vertical opening protection: A minimum one-hour fire resistance rated barrier must be provided to protect all interior stairways and other vertical openings. Existing 30 minute vertical opening protection will be allowed to remain in buildings housing 25 or fewer volunteers or in buildings where all sleeping rooms are located at the level of exit discharge. Buildings that are in compliance with the Uniform Fire Code retrofit requirements N.J.A.C. 5:70-4 should already have the required vertical opening protection.
8. Habitable space: Each sleeping room must provide at least 40 square feet per occupant.
9. Lighting: Artificial lighting of a minimum of one foot candle must be provided at all times throughout the space to be occupied by the volunteers including any exit access and exit discharge. Buildings that are in compliance with the Uniform Fire Code retrofit requirements N.J.A.C. 5:70-4 should already have the required artificial lighting.
10. Emergency egress lighting and exit signs: Egress lighting and illuminated exit signs will be required for any building housing 50 volunteers or more. Buildings that are in compliance with the Uniform Fire Code retrofit requirements N.J.A.C. 5:70-4 should already have the required emergency egress lighting and exit signs if the building is required to have two exits.
11. All buildings housing volunteers will be subject to quarterly inspection by the local fire official.