

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF CHATHAM**



**A Guide to the  
North Carolina State Building Code: Fire Code**

**Fire Prevention  
Code Enforcement Program**

**“Providing Fire Prevention Services Through  
Education, Engineering, and Enforcement of the  
NC State Fire Prevention Code”**

## **THANK YOU!**

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about the Chatham County Fire Prevention Code Enforcement Program. In the information that follows we hope to provide Chatham County businesses and citizens some basic information about the Fire Code Program. We hope that this information will provide you with a better understanding of this important program.



## **THE CHATHAM COUNTY FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE**

The Chatham County Fire Marshal's Office is funded by the Chatham County Board of Commissioners and is directed by the County Fire Marshal and Code Enforcement Director. The office has five primary functions:

1. Fire Prevention Code Enforcement
2. Fire Prevention Education
3. Fire Investigations
4. County Fire Department Technical & Administrative Assistance
5. Firefighter Training

The Chatham County Fire Marshal's Office consists of a team of professional fire prevention inspectors providing services in all rural areas of Chatham County as well as the Town of Pittsboro and the Town of Siler City.

## **WHAT IS THE STATE FIRE PREVENTION CODE?**

The Fire Prevention code is a set of minimum mandatory fire safety standards that apply to almost all occupancies in North Carolina with a few exceptions. The Fire Prevention Code establishes regulations affecting or relating to structures, processes, premises and safeguards regarding:

1. The hazard of fire and explosion arising from the storage, handling or use of structures, materials or devices.
2. Conditions hazardous to life, property or public welfare in the occupancy of structures or premises.

3. Fire hazards in the structure or on the premises from occupancy or operation.
4. Matters related to construction, extension, repair, alteration or removal of fire suppression or alarm systems.

### **WHAT TYPE OF BUSINESSES OR OCCUPANCIES REQUIRE INSPECTIONS?**

All businesses, places of assembly, and some special events or occasions. The provisions of the Fire Prevention Code shall not apply to the following:



1. Occupancy of one and two family dwellings.
2. Farm buildings located outside the building rules jurisdiction of any municipality with the exception of buildings used for sleeping purposes, which shall conform to the provisions of the technical code.
3. The design, construction, location, installation or operation of equipment for the storage, handling, and transporting liquefied petroleum gases for fuel purposes up to the first stage regulator, liquefied natural gases, and anhydrous ammonia or other liquid fertilizers.
4. The design, construction, location, installation or operation of equipment or facilities of a public utility, as defined in General Statute 62-3, or an electric or telephone membership corporation, including without limitation poles, towers, and other structures supporting electric or communication lines from the distribution network up to the meter location. All buildings owned and operated by a public utility or an electric or telephone membership corporation shall meet the provisions of the code,
5. The storage and handling of Hazardous Chemicals Right to Know Act, North Carolina General Statute 95-173 through 95-218.
6. Open burning pursuant to General Statute 113-60.21 through 113-60.31 under the jurisdiction of the Department of Environmental, Health and Natural Resources.

## HOW OFTEN WILL CHATHAM COUNTY PROVIDE A FIRE INSPECTION?

The Chatham County Fire Marshal's Office will immediately respond to any complaint from the NC Governor's Fire Safety Hotline (1-800-622-7952) and complaint calls made to our office. Otherwise, inspections of all occupancies will be provided on the following State mandated minimum inspection schedule:



State Mandated Minimum Inspection Schedule	
Once Every Year:	Hazardous, Institutional, Residential, Assembly Occupancies
Twice Every Year:	Educational Occupancies
Once Every 2 Years:	Industrial Occupancies
Once Every 3 Years:	Business, Storage, Mercantile Occupancies & Churches

*The Fire Code Enforcement Team also assists local building officials on new construction projects.*



## WHO WILL PERFORM THESE FIRESAFETY INSPECTIONS?

All persons who enforce the State Fire Prevention Code are certified to do so by the North Carolina Code Official's Qualifications Board. Each inspector that you will work with has undergone extensive education and experiences to provide you top quality service. This enables our staff to bring to you a clear understanding of fire behavior.

## HOW WILL THE FIRE INSPECTIONS PROGRAM WORK?

An inspector will call the business via telephone to set a mutually agreed upon date and time to meet. Upon arrival, the inspector will ask for the contact person and/or their authorized representative. After greetings, the two will survey the exterior of the facility, then the interior. A systematic inspection will occur whereby a listing of any code violations will be determined by the inspector. Each item will be thoroughly explained, and information provided to correct the deficiencies. Priority items will be identified. Imminent hazards must be corrected immediately! A first reinspection date will then be set for the inspector to return upon. The owner and/or their authorized representative will sign an inspection form and a copy will be left as a record of the inspection.

On or about the agreed upon re-inspection date, an inspector will return checking to see that all necessary corrections have been made. If they have, a Fire Prevention Permit will be issued. If corrections have not been properly abated, a second re-inspection date will be set. Once again, if all corrections have been made, a Fire Prevention Permit will be issued. If they have not, a third re-inspection date will be set and the owner will be advised that if deficiencies remain upon the third re-inspection, civil penalties may be assessed.

*Notice: All Fire Inspection Reports are public record and are available upon request.*



## PERMITS

A permit will be issued to businesses when they meet the technical code standards. The permit will be valid from the time it is issued until an inspector determines that the business is no longer in compliance with the minimum code requirements. Permits are required for specialized hazardous operations.

The fire code requires permits for the following operations:

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| 1. Airports, Heliports and Helistops                         | 21. Mechanical Refrigeration                            |
| 2. Bowling Pin and Bowling Alley Resurfacing and Refinishing | 22. Motion Picture Projection                           |
| 3. Cellulose Nitrate Motion Picture Film                     | 23. Organic Coatings                                    |
| 4. Cellulose Nitrate Plastic                                 | 24. Ovens   |
| 5. Combustible Fibers  | 25. Pipelines for Flammable or Combustible Liquids      |
| 6. Compressed Gas  | 26. Places of Assembly                                  |
| 7. Crude Oil Production                                      | 27. Pulverized Particles (dust)                         |
| 8. Cryogenic Fluids  | 28. Repair Garages                                      |
| 9. Dry Cleaning Plants                                       | 29. Tank Vehicles for Flammable and Combustible Liquids |
| 10. Explosive Materials                                      | 30. Tents and Air Supported Structures                  |
| 11. Flammable and Combustible Liquids                        | 31. Tire Rebuilding Plant                               |
| 12. Flammable Finishes                                       | 32. Wrecking Yard, Junk Yard or Waste Handling Plant    |
| 13. Fruit Ripening Processes                                 | 33. Semiconductor Fabrication Facilities                |
| 14. Fumigation and Thermal Insecticide Fogging               | 34. Welding and Cutting                                 |
| 15. Hazardous Chemicals*                                     | 35. Underground Tank Removal*                           |
| 16. High Piled Combustible Stock                             | 36. Public fireworks Display*                           |
| 17. Liquefied Natural Gas                                    | 37. Explosive Materials Storage*                        |
| 18. Liquefied Petroleum Gas                                  | 38. Other   |
| 19. Lumber Storage   |   |
| 20. Magnesium  |   |

\* FUNCTION PERMITS