



## LICENSED CHILDCARE CENTERS

### Plan Review Procedures & Code Requirements

IOWA STATE FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE  
STATE BUILDING CODE BUREAU  
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Building Code Bureau: [www.iowabuildingcode.org](http://www.iowabuildingcode.org)

### General Plan Review Requirements

Licensed Childcare facilities to include daycares, preschools and others are required to be reviewed and inspected by the State Fire Marshal (SFM) for compliance with State Codes prior to issuance of a license by the State. The review process begins with a plan review of new or remodeled facilities. Building plans may not be required for childcare facilities in existing buildings where there is only a change of tenant or owners, and no proposed remodeling or alterations to the existing building. Please contact the SFM to determine if floor plans are required for childcare centers in existing buildings. A preliminary plan review is required for new projects or projects that include significant renovations, to ensure major code issues are in conformance prior to submittal of final documents for plan review.

### Design Professional Required

A design of the proposed childcare facility shall be performed by a design professional licensed in the state of Iowa. Daycares in existing buildings require evaluation to determine if remodeling is needed to bring the facility into code compliance. Floor plans, reviewed and sealed by an Iowa Licensed Architect or Engineer are required for daycares in existing buildings. A complete set of construction documents are required for new buildings, altered existing buildings or new additions to existing buildings.

### Typical Code Issues

Childcare centers that have an occupant load of 50 or more persons will require an approved fire alarm system, and occupant loads greater than 10 require two exit doors. Occupant loads are calculated using occupant load factor of one person per 35 square feet as listed in IBC table 1004.1.1 plus total amount of staff members. Childcare centers are required to have fire sprinklers if rooms are located in a basement level as per IBC 903.2.3. Infants (2 ½ years or less) shall be allowed in a building if the building has an automatic fire sprinkler or the room occupied by the infants has a direct exit to the exterior of the building at grade level. The owner is responsible to contact a licensed fire alarm installer for new or upgraded fire alarm systems required for the childcare center. New work and alterations to fire alarms or fire sprinklers shall be reviewed by the SFM, and a separate submittal shall be submitted by a certified fire protection contractor who designs and installs the system. Electrical wiring shall be done by a state licensed contractor with an electrical permit issued by the state or local authority. For more information on electrical permits please visit: <https://iowaelectrical.gov/>

## State Fire Marshal's Role

The SFM reviews plans and performs inspections to verify that childcare centers comply with State codes. The SFM may order corrections to a building for applicable code deficiencies. SFM Construction Engineers and Fire Inspectors who review plans or perform inspections are not authorized to design facilities or propose changes to facilities to comply with State Codes. **The owner of the childcare facility is responsible to contact a licensed design professional to design new and to evaluate existing buildings for code conformance and assist in preparing drawings and other documents as required by the SFM for plan review.** The owner is responsible to notify the State Fire Inspector (who is listed on the final report) to request a final inspection after the plan review report is issued. The building may be occupied after the State Fire Inspector approves the final inspection for occupancy.

Please direct any questions to the SFM for issues that are not clearly explained in this handout by phone or email. Design questions and code compliance issues should be directed to the licensed design professional that is responsible to evaluate the facility or prepare the drawings for plan review. Code interpretation issues may be directed to the SFM design engineers who review the submitted projects. Additional information for required plans is listed below.

**The following information is required on the plans submitted to the SFM Building Code Bureau in order to determine if a building complies with childcare code requirements.**

- ✓ Childcare facilities shall comply with the State Fire Code and applicable provisions from the 2015 IFC and 2015 IRC. New buildings shall also comply with 2015 IMC, 2015 UPC, 2014 NEC and 2010 ADA standards: [http://www.ada.gov/2010ADASTandards\\_index.htm](http://www.ada.gov/2010ADASTandards_index.htm)
- ✓ Scaled (1/4" = 1 ft) floor plans showing corridors, all rooms, doors, windows, restrooms and any equipment such as furnaces, water heaters, and electrical panels. (Please label each room for intended use).
- ✓ New buildings require a complete set of drawings for structural, mechanical, plumbing and electrical systems with material specifications for new childcare facilities or major additions to buildings.
- ✓ New or remodeled restroom facilities shall be ADA accessible. Please refer to the 2010 ADA Design Standards for information regarding accessibility requirements for children's restrooms.
- ✓ At least one "van accessible" ADA parking space is required with one accessible route to the building entrance with no obstacles or slopes greater than 1:12.
- ✓ Show any rooms, levels and spaces that are not used for the childcare facility and indicate how they are used, to determine if fire separation is required.
- ✓ Daycares that share the same building with other tenants or businesses shall provide plans showing all areas and how the daycare is separated, showing walls, windows, and floor/ceiling construction (for tenants above or below the childcare center). Indicate what the adjacent tenant spaces are used for (for example: hair salon, office space, storage, etc).

- ✓ Show any proposed play grounds and fence enclosures used by the childcare center on a scaled site plan.
- ✓ Provide emergency egress lighting in rooms that require two exits, exit corridors and exterior exit door landings.
- ✓ Fire extinguishers are required as per code requirements in the 2009 IFC, section 906.
- ✓ Cooking facilities may require approved kitchen exhaust hoods (type I hood) if commercial cooking is performed. (Commercial cooking is generally defined as cooking that includes: cooking for large groups of people throughout the day, cooking meals for profit or fund raisers, or cooking that creates smoke or grease vapors.) Please contact the SFM office for more information if you are unsure if a type I hood is required. A required type I hood shall have an approved fire suppression system.
- ✓ Plan review fees (\$200 minimum) are always required for childcare plan review submittals for new or existing buildings. Building inspections fees are only applicable for childcare plan reviews (new buildings or additions) if the project is: part of a public school; receives funding from the State of Iowa or is owned by the State. Renovation and remodeling does not require building inspection fees.
- ✓ Plans shall be sealed & signed by an Iowa licensed architect or engineer.

**A complete submittal is required before the SFM will start a code review, and the following three items are required for a code review.**

1. An architectural plan review submittal form completely filled out and signed by the design professional. The form is available on the SFM website at:  
<http://www.dps.state.ia.us/fm/building/forms.shtml>
2. Appropriate plan review fees as calculated on the form and applicable inspection fees.
3. Set of drawings sealed by an Iowa registered Architect or Engineer.

### **FINAL APPROVAL**

After plans have been reviewed a report will be mailed to the owner and design professional with any required corrections required for final approval. When the owner receives the report they may contact the State Fire Inspection, after any required corrections listed on the plan review report are completed. Final approval to use a childcare center is then given by the State Fire Inspector after the final inspection has been approved to be occupied. The Department of Human Services will also inspect the building for their own requirements for final approval. Information for childcare facilities from DHS is available by visiting: <https://ccmis.dhs.state.ia.us/ProviderPortal/default.aspx>