

City of Lake Geneva  
Fire and Life Safety Handbook  
For  
Landlords, Tenants and Property Managers



Lake Geneva Fire Department Fire Prevention Bureau

730 Marshall St Lake Geneva, WI 53147  
262-248-6075 FAX 262-248-2264  
[www.lakegenevafire.org](http://www.lakegenevafire.org)

## **FORWARD**

The Lake Geneva Fire Department provides a wide variety of emergency services, including fire, emergency medical, specialized rescue, fire prevention and investigation to name just a few. This handbook has been compiled for the benefit of landlords, tenants and property managers within the City of Lake Geneva in order to reduce the possibility of fire or other emergencies and the effect of such emergencies in rental buildings.

While this handbook is very comprehensive, some buildings may require special consideration outside the scope of the information contained herein. If you have any questions or concerns about any of the information contained here, or something that is not contained in this manual, please contact the Lake Geneva Fire Prevention Bureau at the number listed below.

For further information on fire safety and other fire department related issues, please visit the Lake Geneva Fire Department website at [www.lakegenevafire.org](http://www.lakegenevafire.org).

## **GENERAL RULES FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES**

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Keep addresses on all buildings readily visible from the street side of the building. This will aid significantly in emergency personnel finding the building, regardless of time of day. Encourage all occupants to have their address (including apartment number) and phone number readily accessible should the need arise to contact emergency personnel. The emergency phone number in the City of Lake Geneva is **9 – 1 – 1**. Always stay on the phone with emergency services until instructed to hang up, as supplemental information may be necessary.

In order to assist emergency personnel in rapidly gaining access into buildings, make sure that gates, doors, or other impediments are unlocked and open. Turn on outside lights when appropriate in order to make the scene more visible to emergency responders.

## **SMOKE DETECTORS AND FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS**

Building fire alarm systems are designed to detect fire via either heat or smoke and immediately notify residents so that building evacuation can be accomplished in a timely manner. Building managers should work with tenants to plan their specific evacuation means annually.

### **Smoke Detectors:**

All residential units are required to have smoke detectors installed in each dwelling unit per state law. Detectors are required within 15' of all sleeping areas. Hardwire (AC) interconnected detectors are recommended, however battery operated (DC) units are acceptable in preexisting residential units.

### **Fire Alarm Systems:**

Fire alarm systems generally consist of any or all of the following; fire alarm control panel (FACP), detection devices (smoke &/or heat detectors), manual pull stations, notification devices (horn/strobes), etc. Fire alarm systems shall be maintained in proper working order at all times, per the Lake Geneva Fire Code.

Manual pull stations can become the target of malicious use. Should this become a frequent occurrence, please contact the Fire Prevention Bureau for assistance in rectifying the problem.

### **Testing and Maintenance:**

Fire alarm system testing is required to be performed annually by a fire alarm contractor. Annual fire alarm system testing/maintenance includes, but is not limited to; cleaning of all detection devices, testing all devices, including detection devices, pull stations, horn/strobes, radio transmitter, etc.

Documentation of such testing shall be forwarded to the fire department in a timely fashion following the testing.

**Trouble Alarm Condition:**

A fire alarm trouble condition, generally indicated by a yellow light and buzzer on the FACP can be caused by one of several conditions, e.g., power failure, fire alarm device failure or removal from system, etc. Such situations require that the fire alarm service vendor be contacted for immediate service. This condition may result in a phone call to the emergency contact on record at the time, from the fire department in an attempt to rectify the situation. If contact is not made, the fire department may respond to determine the cause of the trouble. It is imperative that this condition not be reset prior to the arrival of the fire department. Without proper maintenance and testing, such alarms can become nuisances, which in turn can desensitize residents causing them to disregard all fire related alarms and warnings and may result in fines for continual malfunctions.

**FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEMS**

Fire sprinkler systems are a most effective means of controlling fire in residential environments. They help to minimize the spread of fire, while allowing building occupants to evacuate safely and quickly. Sprinkler heads are placed throughout a building in living areas as well as common areas. Residents should be reminded not to use sprinkler heads as hangers for clothing, decorations, etc, as this could cause accidental activation of the head. Fire sprinkler systems require regular testing and maintenance as well.

**Testing and Maintenance:**

Fire sprinkler system testing is required to be performed annually by a licensed sprinkler system contractor. Annual sprinkler system testing/maintenance include, but are not limited to; sprinkler heads, piping, testing of all devices (including water flow switches, gauges, etc) as outlined in NFPA 13 & 25. Documentation of such testing shall be forwarded to the fire department in a timely fashion following the testing.

**Fire Department Connection:**

A fire department connection (FDC) is a hose connection located on a building, which is used by the fire department to add water to the sprinkler system in order to supplement the domestic supply. FDC's shall not be obstructed by fences, landscaping, vegetation, parked vehicles, etc. FDC's are required to have protective caps in place. If caps are missing, new caps must be ordered immediately. FDC's must have annual maintenance performed as outlined in NFPA 25.

**Fire Hydrants:**

Fire hydrants are located around buildings in order to be readily accessible to the fire department in case of a fire. Fire hydrants should be free of obstructions such as; parked vehicles, vegetation and other landscaping, snow, etc. Annual maintenance is required as outlined in NFPA 25.

**CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS**

Carbon monoxide (CO), "the silent killer", is a colorless, tasteless, odorless byproduct of using hydrocarbon fuels such as; natural gas, propane, gasoline, kerosene, wood, coal, etc. Faulty appliances can be a cause of CO production, however frequently the cause is poorly maintained appliances or their misuse. CO detectors are required in all residences per State of Wisconsin Carbon Monoxide Alarm Detector Act. Detectors must bear the label of a nationally recognized testing laboratory and comply with the most recent standards of Underwriters Laboratories. Detectors are required within 15' of all sleeping areas.

The following suggestions are intended to prevent the accidental release of CO in a residence:

- Central heating systems (furnaces, flues, and chimneys) should have annual professional inspections and service. Repair any leaks promptly.
- All gas fueled appliances should be properly adjusted and checked frequently;
- Install and use an exhaust fan vented to outdoors over gas stoves;
- Always remember to open flues on fireplaces when in use;
- When using wood stoves, verify that they are properly sized for the service area. Make certain that doors on all wood stoves fit tightly;
- Do not idle the car inside garages or other enclosures where CO could accumulate;
- Consult the Bureau of Fire Prevention for information on the correct use of portable heaters.

**KNOX-BOX®**

The Lake Geneva Fire Department requires that all buildings equipped with automatic fire alarm and/or fire sprinkler systems have at least one Knox-Box® installed, with keys (or other access devices) to all areas of your building kept inside. The Knox-Box® is an approved, high security entry key management system. Knox-Box® access is exclusive to the Lake Geneva Fire Department. Knox-Box® placement is recommended on or near the main entry into a building, however building layout and/or FACP access may dictate another location or an additional Knox-Box® be installed. Contact the Fire Prevention Bureau for Knox® contact information.

## **EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**

The Lake Geneva Fire Department provides Emergency Medical Services (EMS) through the operation of 3 ambulances staffed with State of Wisconsin licensed Advanced Emergency Medical Technicians. From time-to-time we may utilize the use of a private ambulance service to assist us with calls. Lakeland Medical Center is the resource hospital for our EMS service, however we frequently transport to Mercy Walworth Medical Center and the Memorial Hospital of Burlington

Once again, dialing **9 – 1 – 1** will put you in contact with emergency services in Lake Geneva.

## **POOL SAFETY**

Many water related incidents occur annually, which frequently involve young children; however these victims can be adults as well. Such incidents can be drowning or near-drowning, in which the latter can cause severe brain damage. Diving accidents in shallow pools can paralyze victims due to spinal injuries after striking their head on the bottom of the pool. Some of these accidents can be attributed to alcohol use, which will impair the victims' judgment. Following are some safety rules that will help prevent pool related accidents:

- Children, as well as adults, should never swim alone. Children should always be supervised by an adult when swimming;
- Approved life saving equipment, such as pole/hook, ring buoy with rope, etc, should always be maintained in the pool area;
- Supervision personnel should know how to administer Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR);
- Contact the City of Lake Geneva regarding the requirements for fencing and/or gates adjacent to swimming pools;
- Keep the pool area free of toys or other items that may attract children to the area.

## **DUMPSTERS**

Dumpsters and other refuse receptacles shall be located away from all buildings. Accumulation of refuse on or around buildings is prohibited. Maintain a minimum of five (5) feet from any combustible construction and eaves of buildings. This will prevent fire spread to buildings in the event of a dumpster fire. Excessive amounts of weeds, grass, vines or other vegetation that can be ignited and endanger property shall be removed. The City of Lake Geneva has adopted a Property Maintenance and fire Codes that provides direction and standards for these units.

## **LAUNDRY ROOMS**

A laundry room has great potential as a fire hazard if not maintained properly. Lint and combustible debris can accumulate on, under and around laundry room appliances. Regular maintenance will prevent fire hazards as follows:

- Dryer lint screens and filters should be cleaned after every use;
- Dryer vent piping shall be continuous to outside of the building. Plastic flexible dryer vent tubing is prohibited for use;
- All vent pipes should be cleaned annually;
- Washer and dryer motors should be cleaned at least semi-annually of grease and lint;
- Vent flues (gas fueled appliances) should be checked frequently for rusted, broken, or otherwise compromised flue pipes. This is a frequent cause of CO leaks;
- Gas piping should be checked to assure that there are no leaks, and are maintained to current standards.

## **HEATING, VENTILATION AND AIR CONDITIONING UNITS**

Heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) units require annual service to maintain proper operation and safety for building residents. All such work should be completed by a licensed contractor. Regular maintenance will prevent fire hazards as follows:

- Filters should be cleaned or replaced based on manufacturers recommendations;
- Flues on all gas fired equipment should be checked for possible CO leaks;
- Motors should have excess grease and dust removed;
- Gas piping should be checked to assure that there are no leaks.

## **ELECTRICAL**

Electricity is commonly "thought to be" the cause of fire in residential buildings, however properly installed and maintained equipment is seldom found to be the cause of such fires. All electrical work should be completed by licensed electrical contractors in compliance with the National Electrical Code; contact the City of Lake Geneva Building Department for more information on contractor and project requirements. The following are some safety rules that will help prevent electrical accidents:

- Extension cords are not acceptable in lieu of permanent wiring;
- Damaged cords, plugs and/or receptacles on appliances require immediate repair or replacement;
- Electrical outlets and circuits should not be overloaded.

- The use of outlet multi-taps is not allowed; overload protected, plug strips are a suitable alternative for this purpose.

## **GRILLS AND GRILLING**

Grills used for cooking, whether charcoal or gas fueled are prohibited from use on combustible balconies or within ten (10) feet of combustible construction in multi-family buildings. Following are some safety rules that will help prevent grill related accidents:

- NEVER use grills inside of dwellings, garages, sheds or other enclosures as this could cause CO build up to unsafe levels. Always use grills in open, well ventilated areas;
- Grills should never be left unattended during cooking;
- Always have an approved fire extinguisher nearby whenever grilling;
- Always allow charcoal to cool overnight or wet down completely prior to discarding. Always discard of used charcoal in a metal container with tight fitting lid;
- Safely store charcoal and/or propane cylinders. Neither should be stored inside of dwelling units or on balconies exposed to direct sunlight. This could cause gas cylinders to vent due to over pressurization;
- Always exercise caution and follow manufacturer's instructions regarding the lighting of grills;
- Turn off all burners and main gas valves when gas grills are not in use;
- All fuel line connections on gas grills should be checked periodically to insure that there are no leaks.

## **FIRE LANES**

Fire lanes are, by definition, access roads or other passageways developed to allow the passage of fire apparatus. Fire lanes are not necessarily intended for vehicular traffic other than fire apparatus or other emergency vehicular use. Fire lanes may be nothing more than a driveway adjacent to the building. In other cases, the fire lane may give access around a building to the rear of the building. Their purpose is to guarantee access to within 150' of all areas of all buildings. Where required, fire lanes shall be marked with appropriate signage. Please contact the Fire Prevention Bureau for further information. Some maintenance issues regarding fire lanes are as follows:

- Fire lanes shall not be blocked by any means, including parked vehicles, excess snow, storage, deliveries, etc;
- Fire lane width, which is 20', shall be maintained throughout the length of the fire lane;
- When security gates are provided on fire lanes, a Knox-Box® switch shall be installed to provide emergency access.

## **COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE**

The information contained within this manual is intended to increase your awareness of fire and other safety concerns in and around the building in which you live, work or own. To better serve and engage building tenants, it is recommended that a building safety committee be formed. This committee would make sure safety issues are brought to the attention of management and rectified as necessary. Other functions of such a committee include:

- Fire evacuation planning
- Fire safety issues
- Review panel for tenant complaints
- Fire Department assistance

## **PROPERTY INSPECTIONS**

The Lake Geneva Fire Department conducts annual fire inspections in all multi-family and commercial buildings. Safety issues arising from such inspections are mitigated with the assistance of personnel from building maintenance/management. If specific problems are noted, please contact the Fire Prevention Bureau for advice and assistance. One- and two-family rental property will be inspected if requested by the owner or occupant of the building.