



Home Safety Checklist Work Aid

Supplemental to DCS Policies: [16.4 Foster Home Selection and Approval](#), [16.8 Responsibilities of Approved Foster Homes](#), [16.20 Expedited Custodial Placements](#)

The Home Safety Checklist addresses many areas of safety associated with a foster home. This work aid will assist in addressing common questions related to safety items on the checklist.

NOTE: A child specific safety plan supersedes the below safety recommendations.

Fire Safety

- Why Carbon Monoxide (CO) detectors are required for homes with no gas appliances? Because cars, charcoal grills and fireplaces can create CO.
- Gas and wood burning fireplaces should be initially inspected by a professional but not required. If used on a regular basis, an inspection would be highly recommended if not inspected in two years.
- How often do you clean wood stove pipes and chimneys? It is recommended that stove pipes be cleaned weekly and chimneys annually.
- Ladders are not required for two-story homes but recommended.
- Prohibit fire extinguishers in a can.

Sleeping Arrangements

- Approved capacity to be equivalent to number of beds.
- No air mattresses and futons long term.
- Some bedding requires no box springs (Purple Mattress, trundle beds, some memory foam beds).
- Pac n Play can be used for infants up to 3 years of age. The ideal age for usage is zero to 8 months. Manufacture recommendations is to terminate usage when the child reaches 35 inches tall, weighs 30 pounds or can climb out.
- Pac n Play beds can be used as permanent sleep furniture per manufacture recommendations.
- No dropdown or fold-down sides to cribs.
- Safety bed usage should involve a child with a special need diagnosis or other safety issue such as children who wander at night and could get hurt unsupervised or could get out of the house. There should be a documented valid reason for the usage of a safety bed. They are not to be used for punishment or convenience.

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Weapons

- Secured – location not pre-determined by policy.
- Weapons and ammunition stored separately meaning ammunition is to be stored in a separate location than the weapon.
- Guns to be stored unloaded.
- When using trigger locks to secure a weapon, the weapon does not have to be stored in a gun case but must be stored out of reach of children.
- Pepper Spray is to be secured from access depending on the degree of risk associated with the children placed in the home.
- Hunting knives and other forms of collector knives or swords are to be locked in a case or safe.

Medicines and Hazardous Materials

- Medications including prescriptions, over the counter medications, and supplements must be locked. If locked in a lockbox, the sides cannot be lifted.
- Medications should remain in their original containers.
- Cleaning substances (bleach, toilet cleaner, etc.) and detergents (dish and clothing) can be secured out of reach, latched, or locked away depending on the degree of risk associated with the children placed in the home. Typical household items such as hand soap, shampoo and hand sanitizer can remain reasonably accessible.
- Knives, scissors, and other sharp objects are to be secured out of reach of children. These items will be locked away if the degree of risk increases for children placed in the home due to behaviors or suicidal ideations.
- Regardless of age, plug protectors/tamper proof outlets used.
- Alcoholic beverages stored outside the refrigerator should be secured from access based on the degree of risk associated with the children placed in the home. Those alcoholic beverages stored in the refrigerator should be monitored for usage or secured from access based on degree of risk.

Specific Safety Precautions

- Reference the Water Hazard/Pool Safety Assessment Tool for guidance when inspecting pool safety (https://www.fenceanddeckconnection.com/docs/BOCA_Codes.pdf).
- Trampolines must have safety netting and owners follow manufacture's safety guidelines for usage. Children are to be supervised.

Pets

- Follow city/county ordinances regarding pet ownership (type of breeds and location).

- Kept safe and in sanitary conditions removing waste regularly from the home (no ammonia smell, no visible signs of feces and urine spots). Health issue – ammonia.
- Consider adequate space to number of pets.
- Consider case by case situation when multiple pets.

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Water Source (Well Water)

- Timeframe of former testing allowed – less than one year.
- TN Dept. of Environment and Conservation Division of Water Resources highly recommends well water be tested annually for bacteria. For information on how to test your home's water, contact an approved laboratory.
- Well water should also be tested for chemical contamination every two years including nitrates and metals. If you live near an industrial area, you should test for volatile organic compounds every several years.

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