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COMMISSION
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Ohio Administrative Code

Rule 5180:2-7-12 Site and safety requirements for a foster home.

Effective: October 25, 2026

(A) What general condition must a foster home and its structures be maintained in?

A foster home and all structures on its grounds must be maintained in a clean, safe, and sanitary condition and in a reasonable state of repair.

(B) What types of residences qualify as a foster home?

A foster home can be a house, mobile home, housing unit, or apartment occupied by an individual or a family.

(C) What are the requirements regarding paint in a foster home?

The home must be free of peeling or chipping paint.

(D) What happens if a potential lead hazard is identified in the home?

The recommending agency must refer the situation to the appropriate agency.

(E) What safety features must swimming pools have at or in a foster home?

(1) A barrier on all sides.

(2) A method of access through the barrier equipped with a safety device, such as a bolt lock.

(3) A life-saving device such as a ring buoy.

(4) If the pool cannot be emptied after use, it must have a working pump and filtering system.

(F) What safety requirement applies to hot tubs and spas?

They must have locked safety covers when not in use.

(G) How must outdoor recreation equipment be maintained?

It must be kept in a safe state of repair.

(H) How should potentially hazardous outdoor areas be managed?

Areas such as water bodies, open pits, wells, cliffs, caves and busy roads must be reasonably safeguarded based on the child's age and functioning level.

(I) What are the heating, lighting, and ventilation requirements?

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The foster home must be adequately heated, lighted, and ventilated.

(J) Which substances and items must be safely stored to prevent child access, as appropriate for the child's age and development?

(1) Bleach.

(2) Cleaning materials.

(3) Poisonous or corrosive materials.

(4) Flammable materials.

(5) Dangerous items or substances, including tool or utensils.

(6) Electrical equipment.

(7) Machinery.

(8) Alcoholic beverages and other legal intoxicants.

(9) Over the counter medications.

(K) What are the rules regarding weapons in a foster home?

(1) Firearms, air rifles, hunting slingshots, and other projectile weapons must be stored in an inoperative condition in a locked area inaccessible to children.

(2) Ammunition and projectiles must be stored separately in a locked space.

(3) Law enforcement foster caregivers may be exempt if they can document that their jurisdiction requires ready and immediate access to their weapon.

(L) What communication equipment must a foster home have?

A working telephone or reasonable access to one for emergencies.

(M) What emergency phone numbers should be prominently posted in a foster home?

Fire, police, ambulance, poison control, the recommending agency, and each agency with foster children placed in the home.

(N) What are the lock requirements for doors inside a foster home?

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At least one door to any room or walk in storage area in which a person could become confined shall be equipped with a lock that can be unlocked from either side of the door and from the inside without a key. Children's bedroom doors must not be locked while children are sleeping. Locking outside doors and fencing around a yard or outside play area is permitted.

(O) What water and plumbing requirements must a foster home meet?

A foster home shall have a continuous supply of safe drinking water. Well water used for drinking and cooking shall be tested and approved by the health department prior to initial certification and every four years thereafter. A foster home shall have working bathroom and toilet facilities located within the home and connected to an indoor plumbing system.

(P) What is the maximum allowed water heater temperature?

Water heater temperature must not exceed one hundred-twenty degrees Fahrenheit.

(Q) How should garbage be handled?

Garbage must be disposed of regularly and stored outside in covered containers or closed bags.

(R) What fire safety equipment is required?

(1) A working smoke alarm on each occupancy level and near all sleeping areas, approved by "Underwriter's Laboratory" or a certified fire inspector.

(2) At least one carbon monoxide detector on each level and near sleeping areas.

(3) A portable fire extinguisher near the cooking area, approved by "Underwriter's Laboratory" or a certified fire inspector.

(S) What first aid provisions are required?

The foster home must maintain first aid supplies.

(T) What emergency preparedness plan in the event of fire, tornado or other disaster must a foster caregiver have?

A written evacuation plan with primary and alternate escape routes for each floor, plus initial orientation and ongoing instruction for foster children based on their age and functioning level.

(U) How must escape routes be maintained?

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All escape routes must be kept free of clutter and obstructions.

(V) What safety measures must heating equipment have?

Heating equipment must have safeguards appropriate to the child's age and functioning level. Unvented kerosene or oil heaters are prohibited. All heaters must be approved by "Underwriter's Laboratory" or a certified fire inspector and comply with local zoning laws.

(W) How must a foster home handle pest control?

The home must be free from rodent and insect infestation.

(X) How must pets or domestic animals be managed?

Pets and domestic animals must be kept in a safe and sanitary manner according to state and local laws.

(Y) How should the home protect children from dangerous animals?

Children must be protected from animals that may pose a risk to their health or safety.

(Z) What safety features are required for stairways?

Interior and exterior stairways must have child safety gates or doors suited to the child's age and functioning level.

(AA) What are the foster home smoking rules?

(1) No smoking in living areas or vehicles used to transport foster children.

(2) No smoking in the presence of foster children.

(BB) How must prescription drugs be stored?

All prescription drugs in a foster home shall be stored in a locked cabinet or storage area, except that an inhaler or other medication may be left unlocked for immediate access due to a special health condition.