

Residential Social Services Safety Checklist



Although residential social services are meant to be places of empowerment, safety and comfort, they are prone to the same risks as any other building. For the wellbeing of everyone on the premises, it is crucial to ensure your building and its surrounding grounds are in the best possible condition and free from hazardous exposures. Utilize the checklist below to identify areas most in need of attention at your property.

To ensure you maintain adequate coverage, report any changes to your operations to your insurance agent as soon as possible.

Water Damage

- _____ Inspect all interior ceilings and walls for any signs of water damage weekly
- _____ Inspect the exterior for any noticeable issues, including roof concerns that can be seen from the ground. If something looks amiss, contact a licensed and insured roofer to inspect the roof and make necessary repairs
- _____ Clean gutters and downspouts regularly to prevent clogging
- _____ Remove valuables from the basement, or store items on high shelves away from water-pooling areas
- _____ Install water leak detection devices within the building. Have the kitchen, bathroom, hot water heater and laundry room pipes inspected yearly, as these are most prone to leakage
- _____ Disconnect outdoor hoses when wintry weather starts.
- _____ Know where your water main is located within the building. If the building will be unattended for a long time, turn off the water main
- _____ Monitor your water bill – any unexpected increases can be the result of water leakage
- _____ Have a dehumidifier stored on-site to lessen the extent of water damage in the event of a leak

Fire Protection and Prevention

- _____ Ensure all electrical equipment is connected only to approved panels—avoid obsolete panels (often marked by colorful breakers, red stripe tape, or a blue and silver interior label) and have a licensed electrician verify safety
- _____ Install and maintain fire, smoke and heat detection devices – preferably connected to a central alarm system
- _____ Avoid using space heaters
- _____ Avoid overloading extension cords, and do not use them as a permanent wiring solution
- _____ Have fire extinguishers present in all common areas and serviced annually
- _____ Safely dispose of any flammables
- _____ Keep all trash containers at least 20 feet away (ideally as far away as possible) from the building
- _____ Prohibit the use of cooking appliances outside of the communal kitchen

Slips, Trips and Falls

- _____ Make sure the facility is properly equipped to handle the needs of residents and patrons
- _____ Conduct weekly checks of the property's exterior for potholes, cracks and uneven surfaces in parking/sidewalk areas, steps and walkways. Repairs should be handled by a licensed and insured contractor as soon as possible
- _____ Check walkways, stairs and means of egress daily to ensure they are free of clutter and properly lit
- _____ Ensure all stairs with four or more risers have adequate handrails installed
- _____ Conduct weekly checks of the interior, ensuring all carpets, rugs and mats are completely flat and there are no areas where they are lifting or bunching
- _____ Remove snow and ice promptly after a storm to prevent slips and falls
- _____ Apply rock salt to sidewalks and driveways three hours prior to, during and after a snowstorm
- _____ Ensure assistance is always provided to residents who need help ascending and/or descending stairs

Overgrown Trees

- _____ Trim and remove large branches hanging over or onto the building, cars, sidewalks and walkways
- _____ Inspect your property for dead trees and branches that may fall in the event of a storm, and trim them beforehand

Property Maintenance and Safety

- _____ Discard any trash or debris left on-site after people leave.
- _____ Install security cameras on the exterior of the building to help deter unwanted activity
- _____ Report any unauthorized activity on the premises to the local police
- _____ Contact the police if vagrant activity is present – be aware of vagrancy laws in your state

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