

Texas State Fire Marshal's Office

State Building Inspections Annual Report

December 2023



TDI | Texas Department
of Insurance





State Building Inspections Annual Report

Fiscal year 2023

by the

Texas State Fire Marshal's Office

Submitted December 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Debra Knight".

Debra Knight
State Fire Marshal
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State Fire Marshal's Office Fire Safety Inspection Services

Overview

Under [Texas Government Code 417.0082](#), the State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) is the authority having jurisdiction for fire hazards in any state-owned or state-leased building.

SFMO must give an annual report on the inspection findings to the governor, lieutenant governor, speaker of the house, and appropriate standing committees of the legislature.

SFMO also shares this report with the mentioned agencies. After each facility inspection, SFMO shared the facility report with the agency occupying the building. The report noted all violations and potential dangers.

Background

SFMO conducts building inspections on a risk analysis basis in consultation with the Texas Facilities Commission and the State Office of Risk Management.

SFMO has 14 inspectors to conduct fire and life safety inspections of state-owned and state-leased buildings and one inspector dedicated to the Capitol Complex.

SFMO also:

- Works with state agencies to prioritize inspections and identify high-risk deficiencies.
- Conducts fee-based, firework retail site, ammonium nitrate storage facility, and complaint inspections and consultations to make sure the facility or site meets fire code requirements.

Operational goals

- Verify fire drills occur regularly at state-operated facilities.
- Request building and construction project plans and conduct peer reviews of the plans.
- Identify contacts for all state agencies to help facilitate corrections in state-leased buildings.
- Conduct inspections:
 - Annually for:
 - Residential and patient care areas, such as state-supported living centers and state hospitals.
 - Ammonium nitrate storage facilities.
 - Every two years for:
 - Buildings that are seven stories or higher.
 - All state criminal justice facilities.
 - Every three to five years for other state-owned and leased facilities.

Projects

Texas Department of Criminal Justice facility inspection request

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice asked SFMO to inspect their facilities to:

- Set a baseline of a facility's fire protection system operational state.
- Identify missing code-required fire protection systems.
- Continue inspections in fiscal year 2024.

Texas Department of Criminal Justice correctional unit inspections

Continue "Operation Lone Star" correctional unit inspections in South Texas. This includes working with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, the Texas Commission on Jail Standards, and local contractors to make sure facilities follow fire codes.

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services residence inspections

Continue working with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services to inspect residences before leasing the residence for children without placement.

School inspections

School districts request inspections to verify their district follows fire and life safety codes.

Inspections of buildings not contracted by the Texas Facilities Commission

Identify buildings leased by state agencies outside of Texas Facilities Commission contracts. Inspectors work closely with state agencies to inspect all properties the state owns or leases.

New construction inspections

Continue to provide cursory plan reviews for state agencies with new construction or renovations to make sure buildings meet adopted fire codes.



Fiscal Year 2023 Inspections Snapshot

Key findings

In fiscal year 2023, SFMO conducted 7,171 inspections. The highlights below include all inspections conducted in the fiscal year.



Key inspection violations

Agencies and other entities said a lack of funding affects their ability to correct violations such as:

- Not maintaining:
 - Commercial kitchen suppression systems.
 - Emergency lights.
 - Fire alarms.
 - Fire sprinklers.
 - Lighted exit signs.
 - Portable fire extinguishers.
- Using extension cords and power strips as permanent electrical wiring.
- Unprotected openings in firewalls and smoke barriers.
- Missing required fire-rated separation between different occupancy classifications.
- Modifications or damage to fire doors.

Inspections conducted in fiscal year 2023

Inspections	Building inspected	Buildings reinspected	Sq. feet inspected	Violations identified	Violations corrected	Fire system evals	Firework retail sites
State agency							
Employees Retirement System	1	-	400,000	1	-	-	-
State hospitals	400	177	5,000,000	638	758	-	-
State supported living centers	538	219	6,100,000	1,119	810	-	-
Adjutant General Office	1	-	43,500	6	-	-	-
Dept. of Criminal Justice	821	60	9,600,000	2,063	314	3	-
Dept. of Family and Protective Services	10	12	40,000	22	31	-	-
Dept. of Public Safety	117	61	1,000,000	447	310	-	-
Dept. of Transportation	107	186	1,700,000	259	435	-	-
Dept. of Transportation rest areas & info centers	8	6	105,000	21	25	-	-
Facilities Commission state-leased spaces	136	247	5,400,000	1,215	1,430	-	-
Facilities Commission state-owned properties	11	5	900,000	57	35	-	-
General Land Office	9	16	2,400,000	72	81	-	-
Historical Commission	34	48	328,000	133	139	-	-
Juvenile Justice Dept.	68	26	685,000	99	85	-	-
Parks and Wildlife Dept.	275	143	1,100,000	437	331	-	-
State Preservation Board	149	25	25,500,000	134	63	-	-
Workforce Commission and Workforce Solutions	24	47	1,000,000	537	457	-	-
Universities and colleges	394	260	14,500,000	2,745	1,204	-	-
State agency subtotal	3,103	1,538	75,801,500	10,005	6,508	3	-
Other facility							
Ammonium nitrate storage facilities	30	8	166,000	16	16	-	-
Complaint, fee-based, and firework retail site inspections and consultations	983	930	21,400,000	4,069	5,051	-	576
Other facility subtotal	1,013	938	21,566,000	4,085	5,067	-	576
Total	4,116	2,476	97,367,500	14,090	11,575	3	576



State Agency Inspection Reports

Employees Retirement System of Texas



Violation identified

Red-tagged fire alarm panel at the Employees Retirement System building.

Agency goal

Correct violation in a timely manner.

State hospitals



Violations identified

- Appliances, such as refrigerators and microwaves, were plugged into power strips.
- Extension cords used as permanent wiring.
- Ceiling tiles weren't maintained to make sure fire alarm and sprinkler systems work correctly and quickly.
- Portable fire extinguishers lacked an annual inspection.
- Required gas pipeline pressure tests weren't performed.
- Fire alarms showed trouble signals.
- Photoluminescent exit signs were installed where they don't get enough light to recharge.
- Some buildings had exposed electrical wiring and no circuit identification.

Improvements

- Corrected several violations during the inspections.
- Corrected noted violations in a timely manner.

Agency goals

- Perform more routine fire and life safety inspections.
- Correct violations in a timely manner.
- Report fires through appropriate state fire reporting procedures.
- Work with SFMO to decrease the number of false fire alarms.

State-supported living centers



Violations identified

- Appliances, such as refrigerators and microwaves, were plugged into power strips.
- Ceiling tiles weren't maintained to make sure fire alarm and sprinkler systems work correctly and quickly.
- Buildings lacked portable fire extinguishers.
- Portable fire extinguishers lacked monthly and annual inspections.
- Emergency lighting and lighted exit signs didn't work.
- Combustible materials stored incorrectly.
- Unsealed penetrations in technology closets and mechanical/electrical rooms.
- Unapproved door locks on fire exit doors.
- Red-tagged fire alarm panels.
- Missing National Fire Protection Association 704 signs.
- Missing generator fuel testing logs.

Improvements

Corrected several violations, including electrical violations, during the inspections.

Agency goals

- Perform more routine fire and life safety inspections.
- Correct violations in a timely manner.
- Report fires through appropriate state fire reporting procedures.
- Work with SFMO to decrease the number of false fire alarms.

Texas Adjutant General Office



Violations identified

- Portable fire extinguishers lacked annual inspection.
- Blocked fire exits.
- UL300 hood suppression system didn't work.
- Unapproved door locks.

Agency goals

- Increase communication and cooperation with SFMO.
- Continue to work with SFMO on property inspections.



Violations identified

- Most fire alarm systems were missing or weren't functioning properly.
- Most kitchen hood suppression systems weren't maintained or inspected. SFMO developed a temporary fire watch policy for kitchen staff to keep kitchens open.
- Required gas pipeline pressure tests weren't performed.
- Most facilities lacked required annual inspection, testing, and maintenance of the:
 - Fire sprinkler systems.
 - Standpipe systems.
 - Collapsible hose systems.
 - Fire doors.
 - Fire and smoke dampers.
 - Fire department connections.
- Buildings lacked:
 - Portable fire extinguishers.
 - Required smoke detection in inmate sleeping areas.
 - Code-required smoke evacuation systems, or they were disabled.
 - Correctly performed fire watches.
- There were electrical violations in each inspected unit. Violations included:
 - Unlabeled breaker panels.
 - Unused openings.
 - Breakers tied with copper wire.
 - Missing cover plates.
 - Extension cords used as permanent wiring.

Improvements

- Installed battery-operated smoke alarms in employee housing before SFMO left the facility.
- Met regularly with SFMO to discuss inspection concerns and corrections.
- Requested reviews and code requirements before renovations and new construction.
- Met with SFMO to create a timeline for meeting fire protection systems codes.
- Consulted with SFMO to confirm code compliance before correcting certain violations.

Agency goals

- Perform more routine fire and life safety inspections.
- Correct violations in a timely manner.
- Report fires through appropriate state fire reporting procedures.
- Facilities where fire protection systems weren't maintained or not working are considered high risk and will be inspected more frequently.



Violations identified

- Missing smoke alarms.
- Emergency lighting didn't work.
- Windows were blocked in one building, which is the second fire exit.

Improvements

Corrected violations in a timely manner and requested a reinspection.

Agency goal

Continue to work with SFMO on property inspections.



Violations identified

- Portable fire extinguishers were missing or weren't correctly mounted, maintained, or inspected.
- Extension cords used as permanent wiring.
- Emergency lighting and lighted exit signs didn't work.
- Some buildings had unused openings in the breaker panel, exposed electrical wiring, missing GFCI outlets, obstructed breaker panels, missing electrical cover plates, and no circuit identification.
- Some buildings were missing fire department key access boxes.
- Blocked sprinkler heads in a forensic lab.
- Missing generator fuel testing and maintenance logs.
- Missing fire door inspections.

Improvements

Corrected several violations during inspections.

Agency goals

- Perform more routine fire and life safety inspections.
- Correct violations in a timely manner.
- Report fires through appropriate state fire reporting procedures.



Violations identified

- Unapproved door locks.
- Missing No Smoking and National Fire Protection Association 704 signs.
- One facility didn't have a water supply to the fire sprinkler system.
- One facility had fire exit issues.

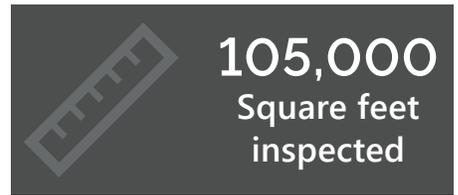
Improvements

- Installed key access box systems in buildings where the local fire department uses the access key system.
- Consulted with SFMO before installing fire walls to split-up different building areas.
- Repaired emergency lighting and lighted exit signs.
- Corrected portable fire extinguisher violations.
- Corrected many electrical violations.
- Continued to correct violations found in previous SFMO inspections.

Agency goals

- Work with SFMO to continue fire and life safety inspection staff training.
- Make sure SFMO inspection reports are sent to personnel at each inspected facility.
- Perform more routine fire and life safety inspections.
- Correct violations in a timely manner.
- Report fires through appropriate state fire reporting procedures.

Texas Department of Transportation safety rest areas and travel information centers



Violations identified

- No marked fire lanes.
- Flammable liquids stored incorrectly.
- Unapproved door locks.
- Fuel-fired equipment stored incorrectly.

Improvements

- Installed key access box systems in buildings where the local fire department uses the access key system.
- Installed 911 address signs.

Agency goals

- Work with SFMO to continue fire and life safety inspection staff training.
- Make sure SFMO inspection reports are sent to personnel at each inspected facility.
- Perform more routine fire and life safety inspections.
- Correct violations in a timely manner.
- Report fires through appropriate state fire reporting procedures.

Texas Facilities Commission state-leased spaces



Violations identified

- Storage stacked too high, obstructing sprinkler heads.
- Appliances were plugged into extension cords.
- Emergency lighting and lighted exit signs didn't work.
- Ceiling tiles weren't maintained to make sure fire alarm and sprinkler systems work correctly and quickly.
- Fire alarm and fire sprinkler systems weren't maintained or inspected annually.
- Portable fire extinguishers lacked monthly and annual inspections.
- Fire doors were propped open, weren't maintained, and didn't work.
- Decorations on fire doors exceeded the code allowance.

Improvements

- Some locations corrected violations in a timely manner and requested a reinspection.
- Better communication among the Texas Facilities Commission, lessors, lessees, and SFMO.

Agency goals

- Work with the lessor to identify who is responsible for correcting each violation based on the lease agreement.
- Correct violations in a timely manner.

Texas Facilities Commission state-owned properties



Violations identified

- Yellow-tagged fire protection systems.
- Missing generator fuel testing logs.
- Missing fire door inspections.
- Damaged fire doors.
- Emergency lighting didn't work.

Improvements

- Communicated with SFMO on issues at state-owned properties.
- Corrected many violations during inspections.

Agency goals

- Continue to work with SFMO on property inspections.
- Perform more routine fire and life safety inspections.
- Correct violations in a timely manner.
- Report fires through appropriate state fire reporting procedures.



Violations identified

- Outlets near water dispensers weren't GFCI outlets.
- Unapproved door locks.

Improvements

Communicates regularly with SFMO.

Agency goals

- Continue correcting violations.
- Report fires through appropriate state fire reporting procedures.

Texas Historical Commission



Violations identified

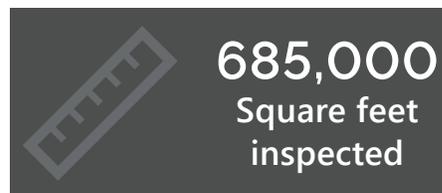
- Some buildings had unused openings in the breaker panel, missing electrical cover plates, and no circuit identification.
- Portable fire extinguishers were missing, weren't mounted, or lacked annual inspection.

Improvements

- Working with SFMO to correct violations at several locations while keeping the historical quality of buildings.
- Communicates regularly with SFMO.

Agency goal

Report fires through appropriate state fire reporting procedures.



Violations identified

- Lighted exit signs didn't work.
- Missing fire door inspections.
- Removed fire doors and replaced with non-field verified fabricated doors.
- Missing generator fuel testing logs.

Improvements

- Requested reviews of projects and code requirements before renovations and construction.
- Corrected violations in a timely manner.

Agency goals

- Perform more routine fire and life safety inspections.
- Correct violations in a timely manner.
- Report fires through appropriate state fire reporting procedures.
- Maintain open communication with SFMO.
- Facilities where fire protection systems weren't maintained or not working are considered high risk and will be inspected more frequently.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department



Violations identified

- Portable fire extinguishers were missing, mounted incorrectly, or not maintained.
- Some buildings had unused openings in the breaker panel, exposed electrical wiring, missing GFCI outlets, missing electrical cover plates, and no circuit identification.
- Smoke alarms older than 10 years in cabins.
- Open-flame barbecue pits within 10 feet of a cabin.
- Missing No Smoking and National Fire Protection Association 704 signs.
- Two community kitchens lacked hood suppression systems.
- Fire alarm breakers not properly marked.

Improvements

- Requested reviews and code requirements before renovations and new construction.
- Corrected the open-flame barbecue pits.
- Replaced the smoke alarms.
- Corrected the electrical violations.

Agency goals

- Perform more routine fire and life safety inspections.
- Correct violations in a timely manner.
- Report fires through appropriate state fire reporting procedures.



Violations identified

- Rack storage with solid shelving at the Capitol Furnishings Warehouse didn't meet fire sprinkler requirements. Solid shelving prevents sprinklers from controlling or extinguishing a fire on shelving.
- Portable fire extinguishers lacked six-year or 12-year maintenance inspections.

Improvements

Corrected several violations identified in previous inspections.

Agency goals

- Work with SFMO on annual facility inspections and monthly reinspections.
- Perform more routine fire and life safety inspections.
- Correct violations in a timely manner.

Texas Workforce Commission and Texas Workforce Solutions



Violations identified

- Fire alarm and fire sprinkler systems weren't maintained.
- Electrical appliances not used within manufacturer recommendations.
- Portable fire extinguishers were mounted incorrectly or not maintained.
- Emergency lighting and lighted exit signs didn't work.
- Fire wall penetrations weren't sealed.
- Fire door inspections weren't being conducted.
- Fire doors propped open.
- Extension cords used as permanent wiring.
- Obstructed electrical panels.

Improvements

Worked to correct violations quickly.

Agency goal

Report fires through appropriate state fire reporting procedures.

Universities and colleges



Violations identified

- Fire doors and door frames weren't inspected annually.
- Fire doors were damaged or missing listed labels.
- Facilities didn't have fire department access key boxes.
- Fire doors didn't close and latch properly.
- Unsealed penetrations in technology closets and mechanical/electrical rooms.
- Many locations had student appliances plugged into surge protectors, not wall outlets.
- Too many combustibles stored in several mechanical/electrical rooms.
- Many fire alarm and sprinkler systems were found deficient by licensed firms.
- Several universities weren't conducting inspections and relied solely on SFMO inspections to identify issues.
- Ceiling tiles weren't maintained to make sure fire alarm and sprinkler systems work correctly and quickly.
- Upper floors lacked enough secondary exits.
- Fueling sites lacked required safety signage.
- Breaker panel circuit labels weren't being maintained.
- Emergency lighting, lighted exit signs, and fire sprinkler systems lacked inspections, tests, and maintenance.
- Extension cords used as permanent wiring.
- Missing portable fire extinguishers.
- Portable fire extinguishers lacked monthly or annual inspections.
- Fire alarm and fire sprinkler systems weren't maintained, inspected annually, or showed issues.
- Missing National Fire Protection Association 704 signs.

Improvements

- Some universities requested a review of code requirements before renovations and new construction.
- Inspected universities gave a timely response to the inspection report.
- To confirm compliance with fire codes, many universities established procedures for SFMO to conduct a fire and life safety inspection on a building for purchase or received as a donation.

Agency goals

- Perform more routine fire and life safety inspections.
- Correct violations in a timely manner.
- Report fires through appropriate state fire reporting procedures.
- Universities with fire marshal offices will work with SFMO towards a proactive inspection process.
- Universities that haven't been inspected since 2017 will work with SFMO to conduct full campus inspections.
- Facilities where fire protection systems weren't maintained or not working are considered high risk and will be inspected more frequently.



Other Inspection Reports

Ammonium nitrate storage facilities



Violations identified

- Wood storage bin walls showed signs of ammonium nitrate soaking into walls.
- Portable fire extinguishers weren't maintained.
- Missing National Fire Protection Association 704 signs.
- One building had structural integrity issues.

Improvements

Local fire departments were made aware of the facilities and provided knowledge on responding with appropriate staff, equipment, and tactics.

Facility goal

Continue to work with SFMO to make sure facilities follow fire codes.

Complaint, fee-based, and firework retail site inspections and consultations



Violations identified

- Fire alarms, fire sprinkler systems, and hood suppression systems weren't maintained.
- Portable fire extinguishers lacked monthly and annual inspections.
- Blocked exits.
- Unapproved combustible storage locations.
- Holes in fire- or smoke-rated walls. This allows smoke and flames to spread through a building.
- Electrical wiring not installed to code specifications.
- Some buildings had exposed electrical wiring, missing GFCI outlets, obstructed breaker panels, missing electrical cover plates, and no circuit identification.
- Emergency lighting and lighted exit signs didn't work or weren't inspected monthly.
- Day care facilities lacked required fire alarms.
- Some foster homes and day cares only had one fire exit.
- Appliances plugged into power strips and extension cords.
- Missing ceiling tiles.
- More decorations on fire doors than the code allows.

Improvements

Most violations were corrected within 30 days, allowing facilities to remain licensed.

Facility goals

- Perform more routine fire and life safety inspections.
- Continue to work with SFMO on property inspections.



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