

Recommended Environmental Health Practices  
For Child Care Facilities Subject to Regulation by the  
Texas Department of Human Resources

FOSTER FAMILY HOMES  
AGENCY HOMES  
(6 or Less Children-24 Hour Care)

I. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SANITATION

1. The appropriate agency will observe the home for basic sanitation and cleanliness. If any special problems are observed, the agency may request assistance or consultation from local health departments or from the Texas Department of Health.
  - a. When assistance is needed, requests can be made to local authorities.
  - b. The Texas Department of Health may be requested to make inspections if local authorities are not available or choose not to make the inspection.
2. The home and equipment should be clean, in good repair and maintained as needed to protect the health of the children.
  - a. Regular cleaning and routine maintenance should be provided as evidenced by a clean home.
3. There should be adequate ventilation and heating in the home.
  - a. The temperature in the indoor areas, including bathrooms used by the children, should be maintained at a comfortable level.
  - b. All rooms should be adequately ventilated as evidenced by the absence of objectionable levels of odor and humidity.
  - c. When windows and outside doors are used for ventilation, they should be screened and secured.
4. The home should provide an adequate supply of water under pressure which is free of bacteriological contamination. Whenever possible, the source of water supply should be from an existing public drinking water system. Where a private well is used the Texas Department of Health or local health departments may be requested by the Texas Department of Human Resources to provide further assistance in regard to proper operation and protection of the system.
  - a. When private well supplies are used, the well should be located so that there will be no danger of pollution from flooding or insanitary surroundings. (See TDH "Recommended Protection for Private Water Supplies in Child Care Facilities")

- b. Private wells should be constructed so as to minimize contamination of underground water. Appropriate chlorination methods will be required if contamination is found. (See TDH "Recommended Protection for Private Water Supplies in Child Care Facilities")
  - c. Where a private well is used, at least one water sample for bacteriological analysis should be submitted each three months to the Texas Department of Health. Additional sampling may be required if contamination is found. (See TDH "Recommended Protection for Private Water Supplies in Child Care Facilities")
  - d. Where a private well is used, a water sample for chemical analysis should be submitted to the Texas Department of Health. (See TDH "Recommended Protection for Private Water Supplies in Child Care Facilities")
  - e. The home should have hot and cold running water. Temperatures of water available to children should be controlled by thermostat to prevent scalds.
5. Adequate and safe sewage facilities with flush toilets should be provided. Whenever possible, the homes should be connected to a public sewerage system. Where public sewers are not available, adequate private sewage facilities acceptable to the Texas Department of Health or local health authority where applicable, should be used to dispose of sewage. If problems are observed with private sewage disposal systems, assistance may be requested by the Texas Department of Human Resources from the Texas Department of Health or the local health department.
- a. Where public sewers are not available, a properly designed septic tank system or other acceptable system should be used.
  - b. Raw or treated waste should not be discharged or allowed to accumulate on the ground.
6. An adequate number of garbage containers should be available to store all waste that accumulates between collections.
- a. Waste should be removed from the premises a minimum of once per week.
  - b. Garbage cans should have tight fitting lids.
  - c. Garbage containers designed for re-use should be washed and cleaned as necessary to prevent odors and accumulation of waste material on the sides and bottoms of containers.
  - d. If garbage collection is not available in rural areas, garbage should be stored and disposed of in a sanitary manner.
7. Insects and rodents should be controlled.
- a. Standing water should not be allowed on the grounds, and the premises should be free of garbage and rubbish. When insects or rodents are known to be on the premises, action should be taken for their eradication.



- b. If pesticides are used, label instructions should be strictly followed.
  - c. Pesticides and hazardous chemicals should be kept in locked storage or out of reach of children.
8. Food should be obtained from approved sources and should be stored, prepared, refrigerated, and served under safe and sanitary conditions.
- a. All milk and milk products should be Grade A pasteurized or from sources approved by the local health department or Texas Department of Health.
  - b. Machine washing of eating utensils is desirable, but proper hand washing may be used. When hand washed, utensils shall be washed in warm water with a detergent and rinsed in hot water that is kept clean. Air drying of utensils is desirable.
  - c. When cleaning agents are stored in the same location with food, these supplies should be clearly marked and separated from food.
  - d. Medication requiring refrigeration should be placed in a container and separated from food.
  - e. Food preparation areas should be cleaned after each use.
  - f. Eating and cooking utensils should be stored on clean surfaces.
9. Pets kept by the facility should be permitted only in accordance with local regulations and the following minimum requirements.
- a. If there are animals on the premises, the home should have a licensed veterinarian evaluate animals annually to determine which ones need to be treated and vaccinated. Examinations, vaccinations, and treatment should be given as the veterinarian recommends.
  - b. The owner is responsible for the continued health of animals and a written statement or certificate from the veterinarian regarding the above should be available in the facility.
  - c. Pets and their living quarters should be kept clean and free of ectoparasites (fleas, ticks, mites). Pens should be cleaned regularly and droppings disposed of properly.
  - d. The home and yard should be kept free of stray animals.
10. Adequate and clean toilet facilities should be available.
- a. Bathrooms used by the children should be located inside the homes.
  - b. A minimum of one toilet, one lavatory and one tub or shower should be available for use by the children.

- c. Each child should be provided with his or her own clean towel.
  - d. Adequate soap and toilet paper should be available.
  - e. Bathroom floors, walls, cabinets, and work surfaces should have smooth easily cleanable surfaces.
11. Swimming pools should be maintained and operated in compliance with State statutes and minimum standards, local ordinances and regulations.
- a. A swimming pool (more than two feet deep) should have a fence to help prevent children from entering the pool area when authorized activities are not being held.
    - (1) The gate should be locked when the pool is not in use.
    - (2) Pool chemical storage rooms should be locked when not in use.
  - b. Splashing pools (six inches of water or less) and wading pools (more than six inches but less than two feet of water) should be drained and cleaned after each use and properly maintained.
  - c. One unit of life saving equipment should be provided for each 2,000 square feet of surface area in swimming pools.
  - d. Contact the Texas Department of Health and/or local health authorities regarding operation and maintenance recommendations.