

2026 CODE AMENDMENTS

Official Code of Cobb County Part I. – Chapter 54

Package I
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Board of Commissioners Public Hearing Dates
October 13, 2026 – 9:00 a.m.
October 27, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.

Cobb County Community Development
P.O. Box 649
Marietta, GA 30061
www.cobbcounty.gov



Cobb County...Expect the Best!

Chapter 54 - FIRE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION

ARTICLE III. – FIRE SAFETY STANDARDS

Section 54-51 of the Official Code of Cobb County, Georgia, is amended, to read as follows:

Sec. 54-51. Life safety certificate of occupancy requirement.

- (a) This Code section shall apply to the state minimum fire safety standards enforced by the fire marshal's office. This Code section shall not apply to separate certificate of occupancy requirements enforced by the community development agency.
- (b) Every building, structure, or tenant space shall have a certificate of occupancy issued by the Cobb County Fire Marshal's Office before such building, structure, or tenant space may be occupied. Such certificates of occupancy shall state the occupant load for such business establishment or building and shall be posted in a prominent location within such business establishment or building.

Exception 1: One-family and two-family dwellings, one-family and two-family row houses (townhouses) separated by a two-hour fire wall and two-family townhouses separated by a two-hour fire wall.

Exception 2: Residences providing in-home day care (if ~~five~~ six or fewer clients/attendees) and businesses not open to the public located in one-family and two-family dwellings.

- (c) Such certificates of occupancy shall run for the life of the building, structure or tenant space, except where there is a change in the classification of occupancy, substantial renovation, reconstruction due to fire or other hazard of serious consequence, renovation or addition.
- (d) Change in the classification of occupancy includes changes that place the building, structure, or tenant space in a different subclassification of the same group or occupancy, or in a different group of occupancies.
- (e) Where there has been any change in the classification of occupancy, substantial renovation or reconstruction due to fire or other hazard of serious consequence, the building or structures therein, shall be constructed to meet requirements for new construction of the code edition adopted at the time plans are approved for the change of occupancy, substantial renovation or reconstruction due to a fire or other hazard of serious consequence.
- (f) Where there has been any renovation or addition, the area included in the renovation or addition shall be constructed to meet requirements for new construction of the code edition adopted at the time plans are approved for the renovation or addition. For the purposes of this section, the area included in the renovation or addition shall be limited to such area as clearly outlined on the construction plans/permit documents.
- (g) Where there has been no change in the classification of occupancy, substantial renovation (as defined in subsection (i)), reconstruction due to fire or other hazard of serious consequence, renovation or addition but merely a change in owner or a change in business name, and a valid certificate of occupancy has previously been issued for the building, structure, or tenant space, a "Notice of Information Change Form" shall be completed by the new owner and/or occupant and submitted to the Cobb County Fire Marshal's Office. A

new certificate of occupancy will not be issued by the fire marshal unless required by the state minimum fire safety standards, and in such case a joint certificate of occupancy or fire-only certificate of occupancy may be issued.

- (h) Business owners subleasing a portion of any space with a valid certificate of occupancy shall complete a "Notice of Information Change Form" and submit to the Cobb County Fire Marshal's Office. A new certificate of occupancy will not be issued by the fire marshal unless required by the state minimum fire safety standards, and in such case a joint certificate of occupancy or fire-only certificate of occupancy may be issued. Businesses operating from an established executive suites or an executive office space are not required to submit a sublease application.
- (i) For the purposes of this Code section, "substantial renovation" means any construction project in which the cost of construction exceeds the structure's assessed value as recorded in the tax assessors' records at the time of renovation. A "fire or other hazard of serious consequence" means any incident or condition, including but not limited to fire, structural damage, environmental contamination, or system failure, that results in conditions requiring a substantial renovation to restore the building or structure to a safe and occupiable condition.
- (j) For purposes of this Code section, renovation means any construction project that involves removing or adding walls, doors, or windows; performing electrical or plumbing work that requires a permit; or making structural modifications or alterations to the building or its systems.
- (k) Construction, reconstruction, substantial renovation, renovation, or addition shall be prohibited without plans approved by the fire marshal's office prior to any work being performed.
- (l) Penalties and enforcement.
 - (1) Any person or entity that fails to obtain a valid certificate of occupancy from the fire marshal's office prior to occupancy as required under subsection (b) of this Code section shall be guilty of an ordinance violation.
 - (2) Upon ascertaining such a violation, a notice of violation shall be directed to the owner of the property and shall provide a timeframe for compliance. The notice issued pursuant to this section may be served upon the party responsible for the violation, either by personal service, mail, or by process server.
 - (3) In the event that the compliance time period passes and the certificate of occupancy has not been obtained, a citation shall issue requiring a court appearance. The maximum penalty for a violation prosecuted in court shall not exceed \$1,000.00 or imprisonment for up to six months, of both, as authorized by state law.
 - (4) Any person who shall violate any of the provisions of this article or fail to comply therewith, shall for each and every such violation and noncompliance, respectively, be guilty of an ordinance violation. The imposition of one penalty for any violation shall not excuse the violation or permit it to continue.
 - (5) The provisions of this subsection (l) shall not apply to: the following occupancies, as defined in subsection (b) of this Code section and classified according to the applicable zoning designation and land use classification established by either Cobb County's

Unified Development Code or the zoning ordinance of the respective municipality receiving services from Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services:

- a. One-family and two-family dwellings, including townhouses separated by a two-hour fire wall;
- b. Residences providing in-home day care for ~~five~~ six or fewer clients; and
- c. Businesses not open to the public that operate from one-family or two-family dwellings.

(Amd. of 2-23-10; Ord. of 7-27-10; Amd. of 2-23-16; Amd. of 5-23-17; Amd. of 11-20-25; Amd. 2026)

Section 54-59 of the Official Code of Cobb County, Georgia, is amended, to read as follows:

Sec. 54-59. Hydrant obstruction and hydrant maintenance.

- (a) Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services shall have ~~For private fire hydrants located at one-family and two-family dwellings, including townhouses and condominiums, Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services shall have~~ the authority to enforce all codes with regards to privately owned fire hydrants including but not limited to: location, inspections, maintenance, flow test (every three years) and obstructions within the service area served. These private hydrants shall comply with the applicable codes, standards and local ordinances currently adopted by Cobb County and shall be enforceable per the terms of section 54-51 of this chapter.
- (b) All hydrants shall be painted silver as needed. Reflective tape a minimum of one-inch wide shall be placed around the entire circumference of the bonnet with the ends overlapping a minimum of one inch. White reflective tape shall be used on all public fire hydrants. Orange reflective tape shall be used on all fire hydrants that are not owned and/or maintained by Cobb County Water System. Painted tape or worn tape shall be replaced. Contact the Cobb County Fire Marshal's Office for information on reflective tape that has been approved for use on fire hydrants.
- (c) Hydrants other than those owned and/or maintained by Cobb County Water System shall have general maintenance performed annually in accordance with the currently adopted edition of NFPA 25. Maintenance and flow test records shall be ~~maintained on the premises for inspection by the Cobb County Fire Marshal's Office~~ presented to Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services within 5 business days of the inspection or work. Submittal of records shall carry a fee as approved by the Cobb County Board of Commissioners. A weather-resistant tag shall be affixed to each hydrant indicating the date of inspection, the name of the company responsible for the inspection, and the operational status of the hydrant using the following color system: green shall indicate that no deficiencies are present and the hydrant is fully operational; yellow shall indicate that deficiencies were found, but the hydrant remains functional; and red shall indicate that the hydrant is non-operational and will not function as intended. All maintenance shall be performed by a qualified company on file with the Cobb County Fire Marshal's Office.
- (d) Hydrants other than those owned and/or maintained by Cobb County Water System shall be flow tested every three years. Flow testing shall be done in accordance with

requirements in the American Water Works Association M17 manual, "Installation, Field Testing, and Maintenance of Fire Hydrants." A site map showing flow and residual hydrants (numbered appropriately) shall be provided with each report. The flow test shall be performed by a qualified company on file with the Cobb County Fire Marshal's Office.

- (e) All hydrants shall be installed and maintained such that the center of any hose outlet shall not be less than 18 inches above final grade.

(Ord. of 7-26-05; Ord. of 7-25-06; Amd. of 2-24-15; Amd. of 11-20-25; Amd. 2026)

Section 54-62 of the Official Code of Cobb County, Georgia, is amended, to read as follows:

Sec. 54-62. Fire watch, special fire services.

- (a) The fire department, fire marshal, fire official, fire chief or their designee, shall have the authority to require, assess and collect fees for special fire services, including, but not limited to fire watch, fire standby, the cleanup of hazardous materials, lift assist, and/or an approved fire watch when potentially hazardous conditions or a reduction in a life safety feature exist due to the type of performance, display, exhibit, occupancy, contest or activity; or an impairment to a fire protection feature; or the number of persons present.
- (b) Where special fire services, standby fire personnel or an approved fire watch is required or requested:
 - (1) When required by the fire marshal, the business, owner, agent, or lessee shall identify and designate one or more qualified persons, as required and approved to be on duty;
 - (2) The cost of special fire services and/or standby fire personnel shall be at no cost to the fire department and shall be assessed as provided in this section;
 - (3) Such standby fire personnel or fire watch personnel shall be subject to the orders of the fire marshal, or his/her designee, at all times and shall be identifiable and remain on duty during the times such places are open to the public, when such activity is being conducted, or while such impairment or condition remains, as required by the fire marshal, or his/her designee;
 - (4) The fire watch and/or special fire services shall be documented using a fire watch log or other record to be maintained at the protected facility and available to fire department personnel at all times. The fire watch log or record shall contain, but not be limited to, the following information: date and time of the special fire service or fire watch duty, beginning and ending times of each patrol, any fire safety hazards found, record of communication with the fire department and alarm monitoring company, and a record of other information as required by the fire marshal, fire chief, or their designee; and
 - (5) The fire department shall be authorized to establish and collect fees to recover costs for providing special fire services, including, but not limited to equipment, supplies, and/or personnel affiliated with special fire services, fire standby, fire watch, fire inspections, lift assist, responding to a hazardous condition and/or similar special fire services requested by an entity doing business or providing services in Cobb County or where required by the authority having jurisdiction to protect public safety pursuant to fee schedule(s) established under this section.

- (6) Fee schedule(s). The fire department and/or fire marshal shall establish a separate or combined fee schedule for all special fire services under this section and present said fee schedule(s) to the board of commissioners for initial approval and for any amendment to the same. The assessment of such fees shall be made against the person, firm, partnership, corporation or organization requesting or responsible for the special fire service within six months from the last date of service. Notice of assessment shall be in writing and sent to the responsible entity and/or individual via ~~certified U.S. Mail with a copy via~~ first class U.S. Mail. The fire marshal and/or fire department shall establish a process for assessing and tracking fees under this section.
 - (7) Payment of costs. Costs assessed pursuant to this article, including reasonable attorney fees, court costs and administrative costs shall be payable by the person, firm, partnership, corporation, insurance company or organization requesting or responsible for the fire service(s). These costs shall be paid within 60 days of the date of the notice of assessment and shall bear interest at ten percent per annum from the date when same becomes due and payable. The county may pursue collections and/or proceed in a court of valid jurisdiction to collect any fees or monies remaining unpaid under this section from a responsible party and shall have any and all other remedies provided by and subject to law for the collection of said charges.
 - (8) Lien. In addition to any civil remedy allowed by law, the assessment under this section shall constitute a lien in favor of the county on any property, real or personal, owned by the person, firm, corporation, partnership or organization which shall be enforceable pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 48-4-78 for delinquent ad valorem taxes, which may include all amounts due under this article. Redemption of the property from the lien may be made in accordance with the provisions of O.C.G.A. §§ 48-4-80 and 48-4-81.
 - (9) Penalties. Any person who shall violate any of the provisions of this chapter or fail to comply herewith, or who shall violate or fail to comply with any order made hereunder may be subject to the penalties set forth in Code section 54-3 and/or section 54-87.
 - (10) Non-exclusive remedy. The penalties and remedies provided by this article shall be in addition to any other remedies or penalties provided by law.
- (c) For the purposes of this section, the terms used herein are defined as follows:
- (1) *Fee schedule* means the separate or combined fee schedule(s) prepared and presented by the fire chief, fire marshal and/or their designee to the board of commissioners for approval by resolution, which may be amended from time to time.
 - (2) *Fire watch* means a temporary measure intended to ensure continuous and systematic surveillance of a building or portion thereof by one or more qualified individuals for the purposes of identifying and controlling fire hazards, detecting early signs of unwanted fire, raising an alarm of fire and notifying the fire department. Fire watch shall be approved and performed by a currently certified Georgia fire inspector working within the Cobb County fire marshal's office.
 - (3) *Hazardous condition* means a response to any request for special fire services or emergency that involves the disposal, removal, storage, investigation, remediation or cleanup of:
 - a. Any substance or mixture of substances which is toxic, corrosive, an irritant, a strong sensitizer, flammable or which generates pressure through decomposition,

heat or other means, if such substance or mixture of substances may cause substantial personal injury or substantial illness during, or as a proximate result of, any customary or reasonably foreseeable handling or use, including reasonably foreseeable ingestion by children; and/or

- b. Any substances, elements, or compounds which are contained in the list of hazardous substances adopted by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the list of toxic pollutants defined by the United States Congress.
- (4) *Lift assist* means a request for and response by fire department personnel to assist in physically moving a person who has fallen and who does not require emergency care or medical transportation and who is located in a hospital, group home, continuing care retirement community, assisted living facility, independent living facility, nursing home, adult family home and/or rest home, commercial care facility or as otherwise defined in Cobb County Code section 134-1, as amended. This also includes businesses hired for transport services who solicit help from the Cobb County Fire & Emergency Services personnel to load, unload, or relocate a patient in their care.
- (5) *Special fire service* means those special fire services designated and listed in the fee schedule(s), as amended, including, but not limited to fire watch, fire standby, the cleanup of hazardous materials, lift assist, and the equipment, supplies, and/or personnel affiliated with such special fire services.

(Amd. of 2-23-16; Amd. of 2-9-21; Amd. 2026)

ARTICLE VII. – ALARM SYSTEMS

Section 54-101 of the Official Code of Cobb County, Georgia, is amended, to read as follows:

Sec. 54-101. Fire alarm requirements.

- (a) All fire alarm systems and monitoring stations shall be in compliance with NFPA 72.
- (b) With the exception of premises covered by a fire alarm action plan, fire alarm systems shall automatically call 911 upon activation of a fire alarm (prior to the investigation of the cause of any fire alarm) when any fire safety standard adopted under section 54-52 or 54-54 of this code requires emergency forces notification and/or a supervised sprinkler system for said premises.
- (c) Only a licensed alarm contractor shall work on a fire alarm system. ~~Effective July 1, 2015, each licensed alarm contractor shall have at least one individual on each job site currently certified by NICET (National Institute for Certification and Engineering Technologies) in fire alarm systems or equivalent as accepted by Georgia Automatic Fire Alarm Association (GAFAA), Georgia Electronic Life Safety and Systems Association, and the county fire marshal. Proof of certification shall be kept on the person of the certified individual.~~
- (d) All work performed on a fire alarm system shall require plans to be submitted to and approved by the fire marshal's office prior to any work being performed. Effective July 1, 2016, all fire alarm plan submittals shall be made only by persons currently certified by NICET (National Institute for Certification and Engineering Technologies) in fire alarm systems or their equivalent as accepted by Georgia Automatic Fire Alarm Association

(AFAA), Georgia Electronic Life Safety and Systems Association, and the county fire marshal. Proof of current certification shall be stamped on the plans and/or a copy of the certification shall accompany the submittal.

- (e) Effective July 1, 2016, all documentation submitted to the fire marshal's office shall be completed and signed by persons currently certified by NICET (National Institute for Certification and Engineering Technologies) in fire alarm systems or their equivalent as accepted by Georgia Automatic Fire Alarm Association (AFAA), Georgia Electronic Life Safety and Systems Association, and the county fire marshal. Such documentation shall include, but not be limited to, record of completion forms, inspection testing and maintenance forms, permit applications, etc. Proof of current certification shall accompany the submitted documentation.
- (f) Effective July 1, 2016, all inspection, testing, and maintenance of any alarm system shall be only by persons currently certified by NICET (National Institute for Certification and Engineering Technologies) in fire alarm systems or their equivalent as accepted by Georgia Automatic Fire Alarm Association (AFAA), Georgia Electronic Life Safety and Systems Association, and the county fire marshal.
- (g) Electronic Security Association (ESA) National Training School (NTS) Certified Fire Alarm Technician (CFAT) Level II shall be an approved equivalent for NICET certification.
- (h) All fire alarm systems shall be inspected annually in accordance with the currently adopted edition of NFPA 72. Maintenance records shall be submitted to the Fire Marshal's Office. Submittal of records shall carry a fee as approved by the Cobb County Board of Commissioners. A tag shall be affixed to the fire alarm control panel indicating the date of inspection, the company responsible for the inspection, and the status of the fire alarm system using the following color code: green shall indicate no deficiencies are present; yellow shall indicate deficiencies were found, but the fire alarm system will still function; and red shall indicate that the fire alarm system will not operate at all. All maintenance shall be performed by a licensed fire alarm company.

(Amd. of 2-26-08 (eff. 1-1-09); Amd. of 2-24-15; Amd. of 2-23-16; Amd. of 5-23-17; Amd. of 11-20-25; Amd. 2026)