

**HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES**  
2201 Warwick Way, Marriottsville, Maryland 21104  
410-313-6000

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# **SPECIAL EVENTS**

**OFFICE OF THE FIRE MARSHAL**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>General Fire Safety</b>                                 | 3 |
| <b>General Information</b>                                 | 3 |
| <b>Emergency Vehicle Access</b>                            | 3 |
| <b>Stands, Booths and Vending Carts</b>                    | 3 |
| <b>Tents</b>   | 4 |
| <b>Membrane, Air-supported and Air-inflated Structures</b> | 5 |
| <b>Confined Areas</b>                                      | 5 |
| <b>Portable Grandstands</b>                                | 6 |
| <b>Electrical</b>  | 6 |
| <b>Heating/AC</b>  | 6 |
| <b>Generators</b>  | 7 |
| <b>Open Flame and Pyrotechnic Devices</b>                  | 7 |
| <b>Open and Recreational Fires</b>                         | 7 |
| <b>Compressed Gas Cylinder Requirements</b>                | 8 |
| <b>Vehicle Display in Occupancies</b>                      | 8 |
| <b>Special Events</b>                                      | 9 |
| Crop mazes   |   |
| Fireworks  |   |
| “Dark” rides, haunted houses, amusement rides              |   |

## Office of the Fire Marshal

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|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Phone</b> | 410-313-6040                      |
| <b>Fax</b>   | 410-313-6066                      |
| <b>Email</b> | howardfirecode@howardcountymd.gov |

9/12/18

The Office of the Fire Marshal has developed this administrative explanation of policies and procedures for special events operating in Howard County in accordance with the *Fire Prevention Code for Howard County*, the *NFPA 1 Fire Code* and the *NFPA 101 Life Safety Code*. These code requirements and guidelines will help ensure public safety during your event.

### **GENERAL FIRE SAFETY**

1. Exits
  - a. All exits , aisles and corridors shall be kept clear at all times
  - b. All required exit signs shall be properly illuminated, readily visible and shall provide contrast with decorations, interior finish, or other signs.
  - c. Panic hardware, door closures and gates shall be maintained and in working order.
2. Portable fire extinguishers
  - a. Fire extinguishers shall be provided where required. Extinguishers shall be conspicuously located where they will be readily accessible and immediately available in the event of a fire.
  - b. Fire extinguishers shall be maintained in a fully charged and operable condition and shall be kept in their designated places at all times when not in use.
3. Crowd managers may be required.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. A copy of the field drawing showing the layout of the event shall be submitted to the Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue (HCDFRS), Office of the Fire Marshal no less than three days prior to the start of the event.
2. The event director shall have on site, an approved field drawing, for review by representatives of the Office of the Fire Marshal visiting the site.
3. The event director shall obtain any required permits (Dept. Inspection License and Permits, Police Dept., Health Dept., etc.) and have them on site or displayed as mandated.
4. The Office of the Fire Marshal may require an emergency action plan for the event.
5. Permits and approvals are required for all pyrotechnics and fireworks displays.

### **FIRE DEPARTMENT ACCESS**

1. Access must be maintained for emergency vehicles to any buildings or structures. A 12 foot minimum width fire lane shall be maintained in the area used for the event. Access routes to the event shall be kept clear for emergency vehicles.
2. Fire hydrants, fire department connections and fire protection devices shall be clear of obstructions within a radius of 15 feet.
3. Vehicle parking shall be restricted in the immediate event area; Exception: loading or unloading of supplies.

### **STANDS, BOOTHS, VENDING CARTS**

1. All vending booths, stands, carts, or other structures or equipment shall be erected and ready for inspection by the Office of the Fire Marshal a minimum of two hours prior to the event's opening to the general public.
2. Stages, booths, stands, or vending carts for these events should be restricted from major access streets. Temporary structures should be erected in parking lots, on fields, or park land when possible.
3. All stands shall be constructed in a manner that will allow vending to the street side or front only. There shall be no vending from the rear or sides of the stands without prior approval.
4. No stage, booth, stand, or vending cart shall be placed within 5 feet of a cross or connecting street or alley; nor shall they impede or obstruct the egress from any building.

5. All vendors/concession stands are required to have fire extinguishers of sufficient size and type for the hazard involved. The extinguishers shall be at least a 2-A:10-BC rating, or a type suitable for the hazard involved. A larger extinguisher (20-BC rating) may be required for liquid petroleum (LP) gas cooking and/or deep fryer cooking. Class K fire extinguishers shall be provided where there is a potential for fires involving combustible cooking media such as vegetable or animal oils and fats. The Class K fire extinguisher shall be at least 1.6 gallons. The fire extinguishers shall be displayed in a manner as required by the Office of the Fire Marshal.
6. Concession stands utilized for cooking shall have a minimum 10 ft clearance on two sides and shall not be located within 10 ft of amusement rides.
7. All electrical devices, wiring, generators, electrical hookups for all pre-manufactured carts/trailers, booths, stands, stages, and other structures shall be permitted, inspected and approved by a Howard County Electrical Inspector prior to use.

## TENTS

1. Requirements
  - a. Any tent over 120 ft<sup>2</sup> requires a permit from Howard County Department of Inspection, License and Permits.
  - b. Tents and canopies used for food service require a permit from the Howard County Health Department.
  - c. All electrical devices, wiring, and generators shall be permitted, inspected and approved by a Howard County Electrical Inspector prior to use.
  - d. Tents shall be permitted on a temporary basis.
  - e. As of January 1, 2013 all canopy and tent material shall comply with the flame resistance requirements set by the Office of the Fire Marshal.
    - i. The tent or canopy shall have a label affixed or an on-site certification stating that the tent complies with NFPA 701, California State Fire Marshal, or other testing standard approved by the Office of the Fire Marshal. The on- site certification must identify the make and model of the tent along with the certifying testing agency.
2. Tent Location
  - a. All tents shall be located a minimum of 10 ft from any structure. The location and placement of a tent shall not block any exit from a structure. The placement shall not create a situation where the building occupants will exit through the tent to get to a safe area.
  - b. A 10ft separation is required after every 100 ft of tents. In addition, 2 rows of tents are allowed to be set up back to back then a 10ft separation is required before another row of tents may be set up.
  - c. Tents and canopies shall not be set up inside a building unless approved by the Office of the Fire Marshal.
3. Cooking/Food Warming in Tents
  - a. Canopies or tents used for cooking shall not be occupied by the public. All cooking operations shall take place under a separate canopy.
  - b. For specific information on cooking and food warming in tents refer to **OPEN FLAME AND PYROTECHNIC DEVICES** (Page 7 ).
4. Heating of Tents
  - a. Only heating devices labeled by a recognized testing laboratory, i.e. UL, shall be used.
  - b. Electrical heating units used inside a tent shall be approved by the Office of the Fire Marshal.
  - c. Fuel fired devices shall be located on the exterior of the tent and air ducted into the tent.

- i. Propane tanks/cylinders are not allowed inside the tent and must be a minimum 5 feet from any door or opening on the exterior; 10 feet if only one means of egress.
  - ii. Tanks shall be secured in an upright position and protected from vehicle traffic.
- 5. General Safety Features for Tents
  - a. Exits
    - i. Exits from tents shall not be obstructed
    - ii. Guide wires or tent stakes shall not obstruct egress.
    - iii. Two exits shall be provided from the tent if its capacity is greater than 49 persons. All tents shall have a minimum of 1 exit.
    - iv. Exit signs shall be provided.
  - b. Tents with sides
    - i. Shall have egress doors that are a contrasting color.
    - ii. Emergency lighting is required when artificial lighting is provided in the tent.
  - c. Candles and open flame devices see page 6
  - d. A minimum of 1 portable fire extinguisher with a rating not less than 2-A: 10-BC shall be provided.
  - e. Generators and other internal combustion power sources shall be separated from temporary membrane structures or tents by a minimum of 5ft and shall be protected from contact by fencing, enclosure, or other approved means.
  - f. Hay, straw, shavings or similar combustible material shall not be permitted within the structure unless approved by the Office of the Fire Marshal.

**MEMBRANE, AIR-SUPPORTED AND AIR-INFLATED STRUCTURES**

- 1. Roofs
  - a. Membrane material shall not be used where the fire resistance ratings are required for walls and roofs
  - b. With approval by the Office of the Fire Marshal, membrane materials shall be permitted to be used where every part of the roof membrane is sufficiently above every fire potential.
- 2. The flame spread index of all membrane materials exposed within the structure shall be Class A.
- 3. All membrane fabric shall comply with the flame resistance requirements set by the Office of the Fire Marshal. The Office of the Fire Marshal requires a certificate or other evidence of acceptance by an organization acceptable to the Office of the Fire Marshal.
- 4. Pressurization of air structures
  - a. The system shall include automatic control of auxiliary blower units to maintain the required operating pressure. The auxiliary blower unit(s) shall operate automatically if there is any loss of internal pressure or if an operating blower unit becomes inoperative.
  - b. Not less than two blower units shall be provided, each of which has capacity to maintain full inflation pressure with normal leakage.
  - c. Blower systems shall be weather protected.
- 5. In addition, all membrane, air-supported and air-inflated structures shall comply with NFPA 1, Section 25.

**CONFINED AREAS**

- 1. Areas for outdoor events secured by fencing or other means, require sufficient exits (gates) for the occupancy of the area confined.
- 2. The Office of the Fire Marshal may require emergency lighting, exit signs and other safety features for the confined area
- 3. The Office of the Fire Marshal may allow alternative measures for security of the exits and/or gates.

## **PORTABLE GRANDSTANDS**

1. Portable grandstands shall be self-contained and shall have within them all necessary parts to withstand and restrain all forces that might be developed during occupancy.
2. Portable grandstand construction shall be skillfully accomplished to produce the strength required by design.
3. Portable grandstands shall be installed to meet or exceed the bearing capacity.
4. Spaces beneath grandstands shall be kept free of flammable or combustible materials unless protected by an approved, supervised automatic sprinkler system.
  - a. In non-sprinklered facilities accessory uses of 300 ft<sup>2</sup> or less, such as ticket booths, toilet facilities or concession booths, where construction is noncombustible or fire-resistive may be approved by the Office of the Fire Marshal.
  - b. In non-sprinklered facilities rooms less than 1000 ft<sup>2</sup> that are enclosed in 1 hour or more fire resistant construction may be approved by the Office of the Fire Marshal.

## **ELECTRICAL**

1. Extension cords
  - a. Extension cords shall not be utilized as permanent wiring.
  - b. Extension cords must be sized (minimum 16 gauges, grounded) to the device in use. Small household cords shall not be used.
  - c. Extension cords shall not be spliced together.
  - d. Cords should be visible or accessible along their entire length so that any damage or deterioration can easily be detected.
  - e. Only extension cords rated for exterior use shall be used outdoors.
2. Multi-strip/Multi-plug - Any device that plugs into a receptacle and allows that receptacle to supply power to more appliances or fixtures than that for which it was originally designed.
  - a. A breaker protected, strip outlet, multi-plug and/or permanent wiring shall be utilized when multiple outlets are needed.
  - b. Multiple strips/multi-plugs or extension cords shall not be chained together to form a longer service.
3. All equipment, appliances, and devices required to be grounded shall be grounded per manufacturer's instructions. Three prong to two prong adapters shall not be used.
4. Electrical panel
  - a. All storage shall be kept 36 inches away from all electrical panels.
  - b. All doors or panels will be kept closed.
  - c. Blanks shall be placed in open panels. All tape or other devices used to keep breakers from functioning shall be removed.
  - d. All work done in the electrical panels will require a permit from Howard County, Inspection, License and Permits.
5. All cords and equipment shall be listed by a testing laboratory recognized by the State of Maryland. (Example UL)

## **HEATING/AC**

1. Only devices with a certification from an approved testing agency shall be used.
2. Electric heating units shall have approval for the locations the unit is being used inside the type of unit.
3. Fuel fired devices shall be located on the exterior and air ducted inside.
4. Combustibles shall be kept clear of all heating units according to manufactures recommendations.
5. Exit doors shall not be obstructed.

## **GENERATORS**

1. Portable generators
  - a. Shall not be operated or refueled within buildings, on balconies, or on roofs.
  - b. Shall be positioned so that the exhaust is located as follows:
    - i. At least 5 ft in any direction away from any building openings or air intakes.
    - ii. At least 10 ft in any direction from a tent or membrane structure.
    - iii. The exhaust shall be directed away from any structure.
2. During refueling of gasoline powered generators or other equipment:
  - a. Turn off open flame devices in the area during refueling.
  - b. Allow the motor to cool.
  - c. Refill from an approved safety vessel.
  - d. Wipe away any spillage on the unit.
  - e. Have a responsible adult present with the knowledge and ability to use a fire extinguisher, and that responsible adult having the fire extinguisher in-hand and ready to act in case of emergency.
3. Mobile (large) gasoline powered generators shall be fueled during the off hours.
4. Storage of gasoline on the site shall be at the direction of the Office of the Fire Marshal.

## **OPEN FLAME AND PYROTECHNIC DEVICES**

1. No open flame devices or pyrotechnic devices shall be used in any assembly occupancy unless permitted by the Office of the Fire Marshal.
2. Cooking/Warming Operations
  - a. All devices in connection with the preparation of food shall
    - i. be installed and operated to avoid hazard to the safety of occupants
    - ii. be of the approved type and shall be installed in an approved manor
  - b. Cooking equipment that is installed in fixed, mobile or temporary concessions, such as trucks, buses, trailers, pavilions, tents or any form of roof enclosures, shall comply with the requirements set forth by the Office of the Fire Marshal.
  - c. Food warming devices shall meet the following requirements.
    - i. It is recommended that only electric devices be utilized.
    - ii. Chafing dishes using an open flame must be designed for this type of use.
    - iii. Chafing dish containers for the devices must be in place.
    - iv. Only devices (such as sterno cans) designed for use with chafing dishes shall be used.
    - v. A snuffing device designed for use with the chafing dish container shall be kept in close proximity to the serving area.
    - vi. Food serving lines shall not obstruct exits.
    - vii. Combustible materials or decorations shall not be used near the serving dishes.
    - viii. Extra fuel containers shall be kept at a location remote from the serving area.
    - ix. A responsible person shall be identified to ensure the devices are completely extinguished at the end of the event prior to disposal. Devices shall not be disposed of until cool to touch.
4. HCDFRS has the authority to prohibit any and all open fires and open flame devices in any structure; i.e.: open fires and open flame devices in barns, etc.

## **OPEN AND RECREATIONAL FIRES**

1. **All open fires (burning) are prohibited except for the following types of fires.**
  - a. Non commercial cooking of food (regulated by Fire Prevention Code as a recreational fire).
  - b. Recreational fire (regulated by Fire Prevention Code).
  - c. Selected outdoor cooking, heating and other similar devices.
3. The following regulations governing the use of recreational fires shall apply.
  - a. A safe area of at least 10 feet will be maintained around the fire.

- b. People shall not be permitted to play in the fire.
  - c. Maintain an appropriate means of extinguishment in close proximity.
  - d. The fire shall not be more than 5 ft. X 5 ft. X 5 ft. in dimension and shall not burn longer than 3 hours.
  - e. Fuel for the fire shall consist only of seasoned dry firewood and shall be ignited with a small quantity of paper. **Trash, rubbish and debris shall not be burned.**
  - f. The fire shall not be used for waste disposal purposes.
  - g. Burning will be done with the consent of the appropriate property owner.
  - h. The fire shall be located at the maximum distance from any structures (a minimum distance of 50 feet).
  - i. The fire must be completely extinguished.
  - j. If severe winds are prevalent (greater than 10 MPH), the fire may not be ignited.
  - k. If a state or local public official or fire official declares a ban on open fires because of a drought, dry conditions, or other atmospheric conditions, the fire is not permitted.
  - l. Before lighting the fire, call 313-2929 (Communications) and notify the on duty supervisor about the fire. When the fire is completely extinguished, again notify them of same.
  - m. The fire must be constantly attended by an adult.
3. Outdoor cooking, heating and other similar devices, barbeque grills, hibachis, gas fired grills, charcoal grills, smokers, chimineas, illuminariums, or other similar device used for cooking, heating, or other purposes are permitted provided they are not used or kindled on any balcony or under any overhanging portion or within 15 feet of any structure, except electric grills that do not use an alternative fuel may be used if approved by the Office of the Fire Marshal.

#### **COMPRESSED GAS CYLINDER REQUIREMENTS**

1. Propane shall be limited to one 20-pound cylinder per appliance for residential type cooking devices, 60 pounds for appliances rated at 80,000 BTU/hr, and 120lbs. for appliances rated above 80,000 BTU/hr.
2. Cylinders/tanks in storage shall be located to minimize exposure to excessive temperature, physical damage, or tampering. The Office of the Fire Marshal will approve the location for spare cylinder storage.
3. Cylinders/tanks shall be in good physical condition and shall have hydrostatic date stamp.
4. Cylinders/tanks shall be secured in the upright position with an acceptable method that prevents the tank from tipping over.
5. Cylinders/tanks shall be protected from vehicle traffic.
6. Cylinders/tanks shall be located at least 5 feet from any doorway or opening (10 feet if only one means of egress), cooking or heating equipment, or open flame device.
7. Flammable gas cylinders (attached to a device or unattached) shall not be stored in a structure or on a porch, deck, or balcony.

#### **VEHICLE DISPLAY IN OCCUPANCIES**

1. The intent of this procedure is to provide a level of safety to the public whenever vehicles are kept inside a public building for display purposes.
2. General safety requirements.
  - a. All fuel tank openings shall be locked and sealed in an approved manner to prevent the escape of vapors.
  - b. At least one battery cable shall be disconnected from the battery (ies) used to start the vehicle engine. The cable(s) shall then be taped to prevent accidental energizing.
  - c. Batteries used to power auxiliary equipment may be permitted to be kept in service. Requests for this exemption shall be received by the Office of the Fire Marshal prior to the date of the event. All requests shall include the method used to disable the vehicle from starting.
  - d. Fueling or defueling of vehicles shall be prohibited once inside any structure.



- e. Vehicles shall not be started or moved during show hours.
  - f. Displayer shall provide a name and a 24 hour telephone number for a responsible person for the vehicle. This information shall be kept with the vehicle, the security office and the management office.
  - g. An ignition key and door key shall be made available. This key may be with the security office or the management office.
  - h. At no time shall the placement of the vehicle impede or otherwise block any exit or exit access.
3. Gasoline powered vehicles' fuel tanks shall not be more than one-half full or contain more than 10 gallons (37.9 Liters) of fuel, whichever is less.
4. LNG and LPG Vehicles
- a. Compressed flammable gases are not allowed.
  - b. The Office of the Fire Marshal may permit limited use of flammable gases under special circumstances.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

1. Crop mazes
- a. The following are prohibited within the confines of a crop maze:
    - i. Smoking
    - ii. Open flame-producing devices or equipment
  - b. Fireworks shall not be discharged within a minimum of 300 ft of any crop maze at any time.
  - c. The owner or operator shall advise all employees of the fire and life safety regulations prior to the employees assuming their respective duties. The owner, operator or their employees shall provide safety instructions to visitors and patrons prior to their entrance to the maze.
  - d. A minimum of 2 employees shall be on duty monitoring during hours of operation. A minimum of 1 employee shall be located on an elevated platform that is at least 10 ft above the maze.
  - e. Motorized vehicles shall not be parked within 75 ft of a crop maze. A fuel break of at least 20 ft shall be cleared between a crop maze and any vehicle, building or vegetation outside the maze.
  - f. A public address system shall be readily available for emergency announcements.
2. Fireworks
- a. All fireworks require a permit from the Office of the State Fire Marshal except hand-held sparklers, ignitable "snakes", party poppers and snap & pops.
3. Dark rides/ Haunted houses /Amusement rides
- a. Exits
    - i. Each exit and the access to reach it shall be clearly indicated and marked by directional exit signs as necessary so that every occupant can readily see the direction of escape from any point.
    - ii. Exit signs shall be illuminated.
    - iii. Any doorway or passageway that is not an exit or a way to reach an exit shall be marked with a "No Exit" sign.
  - b. Emergency lighting is required along all means of egress.
  - c. The Office of the Fire Marshal may require an approved sprinkler system and an approved automatic smoke detection system.
  - d. A minimum of one 2A:10BC fire extinguisher shall be properly mounted near an exit.
  - e. All staff shall be trained and drilled in the duties they are to perform in case of any emergency evacuation.
  - f. Smoking and the use of pyrotechnic or open flame shall be prohibited inside and around the outside of the building/ride.
  - g. An owner may not operate an amusement ride unless the amusement ride has been registered, inspected, and a certificate of inspection has been issued by the State inspector.

