

FIRE/LIFE SAFETY GUIDE FOR EVENT PLANNING



Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority
Fire and Rescue Department

Fire Code Enforcement Division

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Fire/Life Safety Guide for Event Planning

The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (Authority) Fire Code Enforcement Division (FCED) has developed this guide to provide information for event planners about fire code requirements in order to help assure the safety of persons attending these events. To insure compliance with applicable requirements, the contents outlined in this guide should be incorporated during the initial stages of planning. The information contained in this guide should not be considered all inclusive and the Authority FCED may require additional safety measures not covered in this guide.

The following are key elements of fire/life safety planning for events:

PERMITS

A “Special Event Permit” will be required for any event which temporarily deviates from normal use of the building/site. Examples of a Special Event would include receptions, celebrations, exhibits, and similar occurrences in aircraft hangars, airport terminal buildings, at outdoor locations, or any other location not specifically designed or constructed for such use.

Additional individual permits may be required for tents, for any process which produces an open flame, for temporary heating equipment, and other processes which might potentially be included in the event.

There is currently no charge to the applicant for any permit issued by the Authority FCED.

Required Documentation and Applications for Special Events

The following items shall be submitted **at least seven (7) days prior** to the event:

- Application for permits as required (applications may be made online at <http://www.mwaa.com/net/FireCodePermit.aspx> or in person at the FCED offices).
- Written Emergency Plan (see below).

After the above information has been submitted the Fire Code Enforcement Division will review the information and schedule a site inspection prior to, or on the day of, the event. Once the site has been inspected and deemed code compliant, any required permits will be issued to the authorized committee chairperson or representative. This guide and any permits issued will need to be posted at the event and immediately available for review along with the Emergency Plan documents.

The Authority FCED recommends that consultation with our office begin well in advance (months) of the event to insure against unnecessary problems and/or potential cancelation of all, or part, of the event.

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WRITTEN EMERGENCY PLAN

The Written Emergency Plan shall be submitted to the FCED a minimum of seven (7) days prior to the event and shall contain the following information:

- Name of the company sponsoring the event.
- Name and address of the facility holding the event.
- Contact information for the following people:
 - Facility point of contact (24/7)
 - Committee/Event Chairperson
 - Emergency Contact information
- The date and time of the event.
- Accountability procedures (i.e., use of a guest register).
- At the discretion of the Fire Marshals Office, a requirement for designated personnel to direct egress in the event of an emergency may be required.
- Procedure for reporting emergencies to Authority Fire/Rescue and Police Departments.
- Procedure for communicating with committee and personnel.
- Applicable Material Safety Data Sheet information.
- Site Plan (see attached example).
- Documentation of flame spread performance ratings on fabrics and other decorations as appropriate (see Decorations section below).

SITE PLAN

- A Site Plan must be included with the Emergency Plan document. The following information shall be provided on the Site Plan:
 - Layout of the site and basic floor plans of facility(s).
 - Location of all fire extinguishers.
 - Location of corridors, pathways and aisles.
 - Location of all exits.
 - Primary and secondary exit routes.
 - Fire department and rescue access lane location(s).
 - Location of the evacuation assembly area(s) outside the building.
 - Areas marked with brief description of activities.
 - Location of decorative displays.
 - Location of portable power equipment.
 - Location of any fuel cylinders, tanks and equipment (portable heaters, cooking equipment, etc.)
 - Location of tents/air structures.
 - Seating arrangement and aisles, to include aisle width.
- A site plan may be hand drawn or computer rendered.

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DECORATIONS

- All tents, decorations, fabrics, draperies, etc., shall be either flame retardant from the manufacturer or a flame retardant material will be applied per code requirements.
- All documentation of the flame retardant material used and/or flame spread certificates must be submitted with the permit application and available to the Fire Marshals Office representative on site at the time of inspection prior to the event.
 - Documentation of flame retardants may be found in labels permanently affixed to fabrics and decorations, may be obtained from manufacturer, and/or may be obtained from company/manufacturer/artisan who applied retardants to custom items.
- Decorations shall not obstruct or hang from any fire protection devices (fire sprinkler system, emergency lights and/or fire alarm).
- Decorations shall not obstruct or hang from any exit signs or means of egress.
- Decorations hung on the wall shall not cover more than twenty percent (20%) of the wall.
- All decorations hung from the ceiling shall be approved by the Fire Marshals Office.

FIRE DEPARTMENT ACCESS/FIRE EQUIPMENT

- Fire/Rescue Department access shall be maintained at all times. Designated permanent or temporary fire lanes and/or rescue access lanes shall remain free from any obstruction. Vehicles obstructing these access routes will be ticketed and/or towed.
- Parking within fifteen (15) feet of a fire hydrant is prohibited.
- Fire alarm panels, fire sprinkler heads, fire department hose connections, pull stations, audible and visual alarm devices, and fire extinguishers shall not be obstructed from view or operation.

EXITS

- Total available exit width shall meet established requirements for the desired occupant load. Total exit width required from a building/area/tent and total occupant load shall be determined by the Fire Marshals Office.
- Exit signs shall be clearly visible at all times. Exit signs shall not be obstructed by decorative materials or other type objects.
- Exits and exit pathways shall not be obstructed.
- Roping or chaining exit doors closed or open is prohibited.
- All means of egress corridors, aisles, pathways, etc., shall remain free of obstruction at all times.
- Tripping hazards in the path of travel shall be removed.

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ELECTRICAL SAFETY

- All light strings, lighting decorations, extension cords and electrical appliances shall be tagged with a UL[®] or FM[®] rating.
- Only heavy duty extension cords of required electrical capacity can be used.
- Extension cords shall be intact and in good condition.
- Extension cords shall not be plugged together to make them longer.
- Extension cords shall not go through wall(s) or ceiling(s) or under floors.
- Extension cords shall be taped down or otherwise secured to minimize tripping hazards.
- Multiplug adapters shall not be used, with the exemption of approved surge protection devices and multiplug adapters of the fused type.

SMOKING AND OTHER OPEN FLAME DEVICES

- Open flame devices are prohibited when aircraft or other types of liquid or gas fueled vehicles are present unless approved by the Fire Marshals Office.
- Candles, lanterns, pyrotechnics (fire works) and other open flame devices are prohibited in any building unless approved by the Fire Marshals Office.
- Smoking areas must be designated by, and established at, the discretion of the Fire Marshals Office.
- “No Smoking” signs must be posted inside the building.
- Flammable/combustible liquids/gases and other hazardous, or potentially hazardous, materials shall be removed as directed by the Fire Marshals Office.

SPECIAL EFFECTS AND MUSIC

- All music and audio-visual special effects shall turn off in the event of a fire alarm activation or emergency.
- Smoke machines or dry ice shall not be used due to the possibility of fire alarm activation and obstructing visibility unless authorized by the Fire Marshals Office. (Fireworks and most other pyrotechnics will not be authorized for use on the airports unless authorized by the Fire Marshals Office).

COOKING

- All outdoor cooking grills (propane or charcoal) shall be no closer than fifteen feet from any building.
- Propane tanks shall not be stored or used under or inside of tents. All propane tanks shall be kept a minimum of twenty (20) feet from any tent or air supported structure.

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- Operations such as warming of foods, cooking demonstrations and similar operations that use solid flammables, butane or other similar devices which do not pose an ignition hazard, must be approved by the Fire Marshals Office.
- Tents where cooking is performed shall be separated from other tents, canopies or membrane structures by a minimum of twenty (20) feet (6096 mm).
- Outdoor cooking that produces sparks or grease-laden vapors shall not be performed within twenty (20) feet (6096 mm) of a tent, canopy or membrane structure.
- Open flame devices of the following type may be used by permit and with the approval of the Fire Marshals Office:
 - Cooking devices such as “sterno”, gas burners, etc., which produce an open flame.
 - Decorative candles with or without glass containers.

TENTS AND AIR SUPPORTED STRUCTURES

- Locations shall be approved by the Fire Marshals Office.

SEATING

- A seating arrangement plan shall be submitted to the Fire Marshals Office representative for approval. Exit access routes between seating/tables shall be a minimum of thirty-six (36) inches clear width and shall remain unobstructed at all times.

FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS

- Fire protection systems shall not be turned off or otherwise rendered ineffective unless approved by the Fire Marshals Office.
- A fire watch may be required in special circumstances at the discretion of the Fire Marshals Office.
- Fire extinguishers shall be readily available in all buildings, tents and other areas at all times.

HEATING EQUIPMENT

- Fuel gas cylinders shall be located outside of tents/buildings and shall be protected and secured as required by the Fire Marshals Office.
- Portable heating equipment type and placement shall be approved by the Fire Marshals Office.

The Authority Fire Code Enforcement Division would like to thank everyone for their cooperation in assisting us with planning for a safe event. If you have any questions or require further assistance, please feel free to contact the FCED.

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EXAMPLE OF A SITE PLAN WHICH WOULD BE INCLUDED IN A WRITTEN EMERGENCY PLAN

Site Plan for 5/10/2010 "Awards Banquet"
Acme Office Building, 123 Rudder Road

Rudder Road

