



WEST COVINA FIRE DEPARTMENT
Fire Prevention Bureau
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Haunted House - Guidelines

PURPOSE

This guide is intended to provide safety standards and regulations for the construction and operation of temporary Haunted attractions/events open to the public. The requirements listed in this guideline were derived from the 2010 California Fire Code (CFC), 2010 California Building Code (CBC), and California Code of Regulations, Title 19.

SCOPE

These guidelines shall apply to temporary Haunted Houses or similar entertainment venues where combustible decorative material and confusing audio and/or visual effects are present.

PERMITS

A permit application shall be submitted to the West Covina Fire Department (WCFD), 30 days prior to the event. To submit your permit applications contact Fire Administration. An inspection shall be required for final approval and issuance of permit. Additional permits may be required from WCFD, Building/Planning Departments and possibly local Law Enforcement.

Permit applications shall include the following:

1. Dimensioned site plan shall indicate the proximity of the event structure to other buildings, access roads, fire hydrants, and paths of travel from the amusement structure or area to the public way.
2. A floor plan showing the following:
 - a) Dimensions (total square footage, width/type of exits, aisles or interior exit pathways) Locations of exits, exit signs, and emergency lighting units.
 - b) Location of fire extinguishers.
 - c) Location of electrical panel(s) and light switches
 - d) Location of smoke detectors and/or the fire alarm panel.
 - e) Staff and performer positions
 - f) Queue line design and location.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Emergency Planning

- a) The maximum occupant load (including all staff and performers) shall be determined during plan review. A sign stating the maximum occupant capacity shall be posted in a visible location near the entrance and staff shall control the flow of patrons so as not to exceed this limit.
- b) A written emergency procedure plan shall be provided with the permit application packet. All employees shall be trained in emergency procedures.
- c) The emergency procedure plan shall include training of staff and familiarization with the fire alarm tone. Specific personnel shall be designated to turn off all distracting noises (i.e., the sound system) and turn on lights when alerted by either the fire alarm system or otherwise notified of an emergency condition.
- d) This event shall be adequately staffed to control the occupant load and assist patrons in exiting should an evacuation become necessary. An appropriate staffing level shall be determined upon review of plans and may be increased at the discretion of the Fire Inspector.
- e) All emergency staff shall carry flashlights and know the location of all exits, fire extinguishers, light switches, electrical panels, and emergency phones.
- f) A fire drill may be required.
- g) Phone communication shall be readily available for the purpose of calling 911 in the event of an emergency.
- h) Specialized conditions and additional exiting shall be required for structures that are not approved as an assembly.

2. Exits

- a) Required exit doors shall swing in the direction of egress. Tents shall have a contrasting sliding panel without Velcro.
- b) Fabric used in the exit path shall not overlap. The curtain must be cut from top to bottom and not secured in anyway.
- c) Illuminated exit signs with battery backup shall be provided at each exit serving an occupant load of 50 or more. Non- illuminated exit signs shall be provided for all exits serving an occupant load of less than 50. Exit signs with aftermarket switches are not approved.
- d) Two exits shall be provided from each room with an occupant load of 50 or more.
- e) Exit doors serving an occupant load of 50 or more shall swing in the direction of travel and shall not be provided with a latch or lock unless it is panic hardware.
- f) Emergency lighting with battery backup shall be provided in all rooms, areas, and exit pathways when serving an occupant load of 100 or more. Emergency lighting with aftermarket switches are not approved.
- g) Decorative materials, props and/or performer platforms shall not obstruct, confuse, or obscure exits, pathways, exit signs, or emergency lighting units.
- h) Additional pathway marking, including low-level marking and signs may be required at the time of field inspection.

3. Fire Protection

- a) Approved automatic fire sprinkler systems/piping, when provided, shall not be obstructed, altered or used to support any decoration.
- b) Approved automatic smoke detection systems, when provided, shall not be obstructed, altered or turned off.
- c) Fire extinguishers shall be a minimum of (2A 10BC) rating and properly mounted five feet from the floor to the top of the extinguisher. They must be visible and accessible at all times. Travel distance to an extinguisher shall not exceed 75feet.

4. Electrical

- a) Extension cords shall be UL listed, in good condition, and appropriate for their use.
- b) Only UL listed power strips with over-current protection shall be used when the number of outlets provided is inadequate. Power strips shall be plugged directly into provided outlets and shall not be plugged into one another in series.
- c) All extension cords and power strips shall be adequately protected from foot traffic (i.e., bridged) if paths of travel cannot be avoided.
- d) Flood and strobe lights shall be plugged directly into a wall outlet, a listed multi-plug power strip, or a single listed extension cord. For string lighting, refer to the manufacturer's installation guidelines for the maximum number of string lights that may be connected. When plugging the string lights together, the total amperage of all the light strings shall be calculated to ensure they do not exceed the amperage for the extension cord and circuit.
- e) An electrical permit may be required. Contact your local building department for requirements.

5. Decorative Materials

- a) All decorative materials (decorations, drapes, backdrops, and props) shall be either inherently flame retardant or labeled as such or shall be treated with a flame retardant registered with the California State Fire Marshal. Any material not appropriately labeled or certified as fire retardant shall be flame tested and approved by West Covina Fire Prevention Bureau.
- b) Decorative material shall not obstruct fire sprinklers, extinguishers, fire alarm "pull stations", fire alarm horns/strobes or any other fire protection or life safety equipment inside or outside the building.

6. Miscellaneous

- a) Care and consideration shall be used with respect to smoke generators and smoke detector locations. Use of smoke generators may be restricted if they are determined to be incompatible with smoke detectors.
- b) "NO SMOKING" signs shall be provided at the entrance and throughout the attraction.
- c) Storage and/or use of flammable or combustible liquids, gasses, and solids are prohibited.
- d) Open flame is prohibited.
- e) Good housekeeping shall be maintained throughout the attraction and exit pathways.