TOWN OF SUFFIELD

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Fire Marshal

Fire Marshal Special Event Policy # 012

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SPECIAL EVENTS, TEMPORARY STRUCTURES, LIFE SAFETY, AND PORTABLE GENERATOR POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish minimum fire safety, life safety, operational, and emergency planning requirements for special events, temporary structures, tents, membrane structures, food vendors, portable generators, and associated activities conducted within the jurisdiction. This policy is intended to provide event organizers with a clear checklist of requirements prior to approval and operation.

This document is intended for distribution to event organizers, vendors, contractors, and responsible parties.

SECTION 1 – GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1.1 Permit Requirements

The following activities may require permits, inspections, or approvals from the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ):

- Temporary tents and membrane structures

- Temporary stages or special event structures
- Food vendors and cooking operations
- Portable generator use
- LP-Gas equipment and cylinders
- Open flame or heating equipment
- Fireworks or pyrotechnics
- Occupancy load increases
- Blocking or closure of fire apparatus access roads
- Temporary electrical installations
- Outdoor fairs, gatherings, or carnivals
- Out door assembly event exceeding 1,000 attendees

Permits shall be obtained prior to the event.

Special Notice – Indoor Events and Exhibits

Indoor events conducted within an existing building may be subject to additional or different fire and life safety requirements than those contained in this guide.

Examples include:

- Vendor fairs
- Craft shows
- Home shows
- Trade shows
- School events
- Community exhibitions
- Temporary displays
- Fundraising events
- Seasonal sales
- Holiday bazaars

Depending on the event, the Fire Marshal may require a separate review to evaluate:

□ Exhibit booth layout
□ Means of egress
□ Exit access aisles
□ Occupant load
□ Display materials
□ Decorative materials
□ Temporary electrical installations
□ Cooking demonstrations
□ Open flame devices
□ Compressed gas cylinders
□ LP-Gas
□ Fire alarm system impacts

□ Sprinkler system clearance
□ Fire department access
□ Vendor setup

Additional inspections may be required before the event opens to the public.

Please contact the Fire Marshal's Office during the planning stages to determine the applicable requirements for indoor events and exhibits.

1.2 Site Plan Submission

A site plan shall be submitted when required by the AHJ and shall include:

- Event name and responsible party contact information
- Event dates and operating hours
- Tent and temporary structure locations
- Occupant loads
- Fire apparatus access roads
- Emergency vehicle access points
- Portable fire extinguisher locations
- Generator locations
- Fuel storage locations
- Cooking vendor locations
- Electrical equipment locations
- Means of egress and exit pathways
- Barricades or fencing
- Medical or first aid stations
- Stage locations
- Assembly areas
- Weather emergency shelter locations

Additional Information May Be Requested

Depending on the nature of the event, the Fire Marshal may require additional information, including but not limited to:

- Crowd management plan.
- Life Safety Evaluation.
- Weather emergency procedures.
- Fire watch procedures.
- Vendor fire safety certifications.
- Food truck inspection documentation.
- Tent flame-resistance certificates.
- Generator specifications.

- Electrical distribution plans.
- Temporary stage engineering documentation.
- Fireworks or special effects permits.
- Security plan.
- Public address/notification procedures.

1.3 Fire Department Access

Fire lanes and emergency access roads shall remain unobstructed at all times.

Minimum requirements include:

- Fire apparatus access roads maintained throughout the event
- Minimum 20 feet required road widths maintained
- Gates or barriers accessible to emergency personnel
- No parking in designated fire lanes
- Access maintained to fire hydrants and fire department connections

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1.4 Inspections

The AHJ may conduct inspections before, during, and after the event.

The permit holder shall:

- Maintain all safety systems in working order
- Correct hazards immediately upon notification
- Ensure all required exits remain clear and unobstructed
- Maintain compliance throughout the duration of the event

SECTION 2 – TENTS, TEMPORARY STRUCTURES, AND MEMBRANE STRUCTURES

2.1 General Requirements

All tents, canopies, temporary membrane structures, and temporary special event structures shall comply with applicable fire and building code requirements.

Tents, canopies, or membrane structures having an area in excess of 400 square feet shall not be erected, operated, or maintained without approval and permits as required by the AHJ.

Tents used for individual purposes with a maximum size of 700 square feet and open on all sides shall not require a permit.

The aggregate area of multiple tents placed side by side which exceeds 700 square feet shall have a twelve (12) foot fire break between other tents.

Fireworks shall not be used within one hundred (100) feet of tents.

A site plan may be required for tents or temporary structures exceeding 400 square feet and shall include:

- Tent dimensions
- Separation distances
- Means of egress
- Seating arrangements
- Occupant load
- Fire extinguisher locations
- Cooking equipment locations
- Generator locations
- Electrical equipment locations
- Fire department access routes
- Anchor and stability design
- No smoking sign locations

2.2 Flame Resistance

Tent and membrane materials shall:

- Be flame resistant
- Have required certification available on site
- Be maintained in accordance with manufacturer specifications

2.2.1 Combustible Vegetation and Ignition Source Clearance – Section 3103.8.2

Combustible vegetation, dry grass, weeds, rubbish, trash, and other combustible waste shall be removed from the area beneath temporary membrane structures, tents, canopies, concession areas, cooking areas, generators, and adjacent areas where ignition hazards exist.

Open flames or other ignition sources shall be separated from combustible materials as required by the AHJ.

Exceptions may include:

- Decorative materials approved by the AHJ and maintained in a flame-retardant condition
- Landscaping or vegetation that does not create a fire hazard as determined by the AHJ

2.3 Means of Egress

Means of egress shall:

- Remain unobstructed at all times
- Be properly illuminated where required
- Be clearly identified with exit signage where required
- Provide adequate width based on occupant load

2.3.1 Exit Sign Requirements – Section 3103.12.2

Exit signs shall be installed where required by the AHJ and applicable fire code requirements.

Exit signs shall:

- Clearly identify exit locations
- Be readily visible from occupied areas
- Be illuminated where required
- Remain unobstructed at all times

Exceptions may include:

- Small tents or canopies where exits are readily apparent
- Open-sided tents where approved by the AHJ
- Events with sufficient natural lighting and clearly visible exits as approved by the AHJ

2.4 Seating Arrangements

Seating arrangements shall comply with occupant load and egress requirements.

2.5 Electrical Equipment

Electrical wiring and equipment shall:

- Be installed in a safe manner
- Be protected from physical damage
- Use approved extension cords and power distribution equipment
- Be maintained in good operating condition

2.6 Heating and Cooking Equipment

Heating and cooking equipment shall:

- Be separated from combustible materials
- Be operated safely and attended while in use

- Have portable fire extinguishers readily available
- Comply with all applicable fire code requirements

2.6.1 Food Trucks and Mobile Cooking Operations

Food trucks, trailers, and mobile cooking operations shall comply with applicable fire code requirements.

Food trucks and mobile cooking operations shall:

- Maintain twenty (20) feet required separation distances from buildings, structures, combustible materials, and other vehicles
- Maintain clear fire department access at all times
- Provide portable fire extinguishers as required
- Provide K-Class extinguishers where required
- Maintain suppression systems in accordance with applicable standards
- Secure LP-Gas containers and fuel systems
- Shut down operations during unsafe conditions when directed by the AHJ
- Maintain access to exits and egress pathways
- Prevent accumulation of grease and combustible waste

The AHJ may require inspections prior to operation.

2.6.2 Portable Fire Extinguishers for Cooking Operations

Portable fire extinguishers shall be provided for cooking operations in accordance with fire code requirements.

At minimum:

- A minimum 2A:10BC rated extinguisher shall be provided
- K-Class extinguishers shall be provided for cooking operations involving vegetable or animal oils and fats
- Fire extinguishers shall be visible and readily accessible during operations

2.6.3 Mobile and Temporary Cooking Equipment Requirements – Sections 3106.2 through 3106.6.3

Mobile cooking operations, temporary cooking vendors, and food trucks shall comply with the following requirements:

Cooking Equipment Safety

- Cooking equipment shall be maintained in safe operating condition
- Deep fat fryers shall not be filled beyond manufacturer limitations

- Cooking equipment producing grease-laden vapors shall have required suppression systems where applicable
- Cooking equipment shall be attended while operating
- Cooking equipment shall not be located within means of egress pathways

Separation Distances

- Cooking appliances shall be separated from tents, canopies, structures, combustible materials, and the public as required by code and the AHJ
- Food trucks and mobile cooking operations shall maintain approved separation distances from buildings, exits, fire hydrants, fire department connections, and other vehicles

LP-Gas Systems

- LP-Gas containers shall be secured in an upright position
- LP-Gas systems shall be maintained free from leaks and physical damage
- Hoses, regulators, and connections shall be maintained in good condition
- Cylinders not in use shall have protective caps installed where required

Fuel and Electrical Safety

- Fuel supplies shall be minimized to operational needs
- Electrical cords shall be protected from physical damage and trip hazards
- Generators shall comply with all applicable generator safety requirements
- Fueling operations shall be conducted safely and away from ignition sources

Fire Protection Requirements

- Portable fire extinguishers shall be provided and maintained
- K-Class extinguishers shall be provided where required
- Employees operating cooking equipment shall be familiar with extinguisher use
- Suppression systems shall be inspected and maintained where required

Operational Safety

- Accumulation of grease and combustible waste shall be prevented
- Ashes and oily rags shall be disposed of in approved containers
- Emergency shutoff valves shall remain accessible
- Cooking operations shall cease during unsafe conditions when ordered by the AHJ

Inspections and Enforcement

- Mobile cooking operations may be inspected prior to operation
- Unsafe equipment or operations may be ordered shut down by the AHJ
- The AHJ may require additional safeguards based upon site conditions or hazards

At minimum:

- A minimum 2A:10BC rated extinguisher shall be provided
- K-Class extinguishers shall be provided for cooking operations involving vegetable or animal oils and fats
- Fire extinguishers shall be visible and readily accessible during operations

2.7 Smoking

Smoking shall be prohibited where required by the AHJ or where combustible hazards exist.

2.8 Open Flame Devices

Open flame devices may require approval by the AHJ and shall be operated safely.

2.9 Portable Fire Extinguishers

Portable fire extinguishers shall:

- Be provided throughout the event site as required
- Be visible and accessible
- Be properly serviced and tagged
- Be appropriate for the hazard present

2.10 Crowd Management

The AHJ may require trained crowd managers or event staff based upon:

- Occupant load
- Event type
- Event duration
- Presence of temporary structures
- Special hazards

2.11 Weather Monitoring

Event organizers shall monitor weather conditions and maintain procedures for:

- High winds
- Severe thunderstorms
- Lightning
- Heavy rain
- Evacuation and sheltering

SECTION 3 – LIFE SAFETY EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS

(Reference: Life Safety Evaluation Sections 10.14.3 through 10.14.3.2)

3.1 Life Safety Evaluation Required

A life safety evaluation may be required for events involving:

- Large occupant loads
- Outdoor assembly events
- Temporary structures
- Special hazards
- Festivals, concerts, fairs, or similar events

3.2 Evaluation Contents

The life safety evaluation shall address:

- Occupant capacity
- Means of egress
- Emergency evacuation procedures
- Fire department access
- Medical emergency response
- Severe weather planning
- Crowd management
- Fire protection systems
- Communication procedures
- Hazard identification and mitigation

3.3 Emergency Action Plan

An emergency action plan shall be developed and provided when required.

The plan should include:

- Emergency contact information
- Evacuation procedures
- Shelter-in-place procedures
- Lost child procedures
- Fire emergency procedures
- Severe weather procedures
- Medical emergency procedures
- Communication methods
- Staff responsibilities

3.4 Standby Personnel

Where required by the AHJ, standby fire personnel shall be provided during the event.

For outdoor events with anticipated attendance exceeding 1,000 persons, the AHJ may require on-site EMS personnel. For events exceeding 5,000 persons, a staffed ambulance shall be provided unless waived by the Fire Marshal after consultation with the EMS provider. The Fire Marshal may require additional EMS, fire, law enforcement, crowd management personnel, or emergency planning based upon event-specific hazards.

SECTION 3.5 – COST RECOVERY FOR PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES

The Town may require event organizers to reimburse the costs associated with public safety services required for a special event, including but not limited to police officers, emergency medical personnel, ambulances, fire apparatus, fire watch personnel, crowd managers, inspections, and other emergency resources deemed necessary by the Fire Marshal, Police Chief, Fire Chief, EMS Chief or their designees.

The purpose of this provision is to ensure that special events do not create an undue financial burden on the Town and that adequate public safety resources remain available to protect the community.

3.5 Portable Fire Extinguishers

Portable fire extinguishers shall be provided throughout the event in locations approved by the AHJ.

3.6 Crowd Manager Requirements

Crowd managers may be required by the AHJ for events involving large occupant loads, indoor or outdoor assembly occupancies, festivals, concerts, fairs, entertainment venues, or other events where crowd control and emergency evacuation may be necessary.

Crowd managers shall:

- Be identifiable to event staff and emergency responders
- Be familiar with the event layout and means of egress
- Monitor occupant loads and crowd conditions
- Maintain exits and exit access free from obstruction
- Assist with emergency notifications and evacuation procedures
- Coordinate with emergency responders during incidents
- Be trained on emergency procedures and communication methods
- Maintain communication with event organizers and emergency personnel
- Monitor for unsafe conditions or overcrowding

- Report emergencies immediately to event management and emergency personnel

A minimum of one (1) crowd manager shall be provided for every 250 persons or portion thereof, unless otherwise approved by the AHJ.

The AHJ may require additional crowd managers based on:

- Occupant load
- Event type
- Event duration
- Alcohol service
- Use of temporary structures
- Special hazards or high-risk activities

Crowd managers shall remain on duty during all occupied periods of the event.

3.7 Crowd Manager Training

Where required by the AHJ, crowd managers shall receive training on:

- Emergency evacuation procedures
- Fire extinguisher locations
- Emergency communication methods
- Severe weather procedures
- Shelter-in-place procedures
- Medical emergency reporting procedures
- Crowd control and panic prevention
- Fire department access routes

Documentation of crowd manager assignments and training may be required by the AHJ.

SECTION 4 – PORTABLE GENERATOR REQUIREMENTS

(Reference: Portable Generator Requirements Sections 10.15 through 10.15.10)

4.1 General Requirements

Portable and vehicle-mounted generators shall be operated in accordance with fire code requirements and manufacturer instructions.

4.2 Generator Placement

Generators shall:

- Be located outdoors only
- Be placed a minimum of 20 feet from structures, tents, canopies, and combustible materials unless otherwise approved
- Be protected from public contact
- Be protected from vehicle impact where necessary
- Be stable and secured against movement
- Shall be grounded complying to NFPA 70

4.3 Carbon Monoxide Safety

Generators shall not be operated in:

- Buildings
- Tents
- Enclosed areas
- Attached garages
- Areas where exhaust may enter occupied spaces

4.4 Refueling Operations

Generators shall:

- Not be refueled while operating
- Be shut down and cooled prior to refueling
- Be refueled using approved fuel containers
- Have spills cleaned immediately

4.5 Fuel Storage

Fuel storage shall:

- Be minimized to necessary quantities
- Use approved containers
- Be separated from ignition sources
- Be secured from public access

4.6 Electrical Safety

Generator electrical installations shall:

- Be properly grounded in accordance with manufacturer requirements and applicable electrical codes
- Use approved cords and connectors

- Be protected from damage
- Avoid trip hazards
- Be protected from weather exposure where required
- Be properly grounded where required

4.7 Fire Protection

Portable fire extinguishers shall be provided near generators and fuel storage areas.

4.8 Generator Supervision

Generators shall be monitored during operation and maintained in safe operating condition.

4.9 Noise and Exhaust Considerations

Generator placement shall consider:

- Exhaust direction
- Public exposure
- Ventilation
- Noise impacts

4.10 AHJ Authority

The AHJ may require:

- Additional separation distances
- Fire watch personnel
- Additional extinguishers
- Barriers or fencing
- Shutdown of unsafe equipment
