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AMUSEMENT BUILDING GUIDELINES

SPECIAL AMUSEMENT BUILDINGS, HAUNTED HOUSES, GHOST WALKS AND SIMILAR AMUSEMENT USES THAT ARE TEMPORARY

These guidelines are a summary of some of the regulations found in the 2016 California Fire Code, 2016 California Building Code, and Modesto Municipal Code. They are not a complete reiteration of those Codes. All requirements of the California Fire Code, California Building Code, Modesto Municipal Code, and other pertinent Codes, regulations, and policies shall be complied with.

GENERAL

- A. N101.1 **Scope.** These regulations shall apply to haunted houses, ghost walks, special amusement buildings, and similar amusement uses that are temporary. Code references herein are to the 2016 California Fire Code (CFC), to Appendix N of the 2016 California Fire Code (Nxxx.x), and to the 2016 California Building Code (CBC).
- B. N101.2 **Permits.** A permit to operate an Amusement Building shall be required for special amusement buildings, haunted houses, ghost walks, and similar amusement uses (CFC 105.6.2). Other permits may also be required depending on the activity.
- C. N101.2.1 **Permit documents.** The Amusement Building permit application shall include a dimensioned site diagram and floor plan.
- **A site diagram shall show the following:**
 1. The proximity of the event building(s) to other structures or hazardous areas.
 2. The path of travel from the event building or area to the public way.
 3. The location of exterior evacuation assembly points.
 4. The location of any fire protection equipment or devices (e.g. FDC, fire riser, etc.)
 - **A floor plan shall show the following:**
 1. Dimensions of the area being used (include total square footage, width, type of exits, interior exit pathways, aisles, aisle widths, etc.).
 2. The path of travel shall include the layout of any mazes and any mirrors or other display items that may confuse the egress paths.
 3. A brief description of what will be depicted in each room or area along the walk or course including the type of special effects to be utilized.
 4. Location of exits, exit signs, and emergency lighting.
 5. Location of electrical panel(s) and light switches.
 6. Handicap accessible egress routes.
 7. When required, area of safe refuge.

8. When required by CFC 907.2.12 (special amusement buildings) location of fire alarm control panels, manual fire alarm pull stations, smoke alarms, horn/strobes, and other fire equipment.
9. Portable fire extinguisher locations.
10. The location and fuel capacity of all generators and fuel storage.

DEFINITIONS

- D. N102.1 **DECORATIVE MATERIALS.** All materials used for decorative, acoustical or other effect (such as curtains, draperies, fabrics, streamers, and surface coverings) and all other materials utilized for decorative effect (such as batting, cloth, cotton, hay stalks, straw, vines, leaves, trees, moss and similar items), including foam plastics and other materials containing foam plastics.
- E. N102.2 **HAUNTED HOUSE.** A temporary building or structure, or portion thereof, which contains a system that transports passengers or provides a walkway through a course so arranged that the means of egresses are not apparent due to theatrical distractions, not visible due to low illumination, are disguised or are not readily available due to the method of transportation through the building or structure.
- F. N102.3 **GHOST WALKS.** Similar to haunted houses and may include both indoor and outdoor areas where the means of egresses are similarly not readily identifiable.
- G. CFC 202 **SPECIAL AMUSEMENT BUILDING.** A building that is temporary, permanent or mobile that contains a device or system that conveys passengers or provides a walkway along, around or over a course in any direction as a form of amusement arranged so that the egress path is not readily apparent due to visual or audio distractions or an intentionally confounded egress path, or is not readily available because of the mode of conveyance through the building or structure.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- H. CBC 411.1 **Allowable structures.** Special amusement buildings, haunted houses, ghost walks, and similar amusement uses shall only be located in structures that comply with the provisions for special amusement buildings in the Building Code and in the Fire Code. **NOTE:** Amusement buildings or portions thereof that are without walls or a roof and constructed to prevent the accumulation of smoke need not comply with this paragraph.
- I. N103.2 **Tents and membrane structures.** The total square footage of tents and membrane structures used in conjunction with these guidelines shall be less than 1,000 square feet. The travel distance to an exit from any location in a tent or membrane structure shall be less than 50 feet. Tents and membrane structures shall comply with all applicable requirements of Chapter 31 of the California Fire Code.
- J. N103.3 **Fire evacuation plans.** A fire safety and evacuation plan that complies with CFC 404 shall be submitted.
- K. N103.4 **Staffing.** The event shall be adequately staffed by qualified person(s) to control the occupant load and assist patrons in exiting should an evacuation become necessary. Staffing level shall be determined upon review of plans and may be increased at the discretion of the Fire Code Official. Each staff member shall carry a powerful flashlight loaded with fresh batteries. Extra fresh batteries shall be immediately available.

- L. N103.5 **Occupant load.** The maximum occupant load shall be in accordance with CFC Table 1004.1.2 assuming 5 square feet per person. The Fire Marshal may direct a lesser maximum number based on specific safety issues in the venue. A sign stating the maximum approved occupancy shall be posted in a visible location near the entrance. The attendant(s) shall control the flow of patrons so as not to exceed this limit.
- M. N103.6 **Exits.** Exiting shall be in accordance with CFC Chapter 10 and these guidelines.
1. Two exits shall be provided from each room with an occupant load of 50 or more. Required exit doors shall swing in the direction of egress.
 2. Illuminated exit signs shall be provided at each exit serving an occupant load of 50 or more. Emergency power shall be provided by fresh batteries and/or by generator.
 3. Exit doors serving an occupant load of 50 or more shall not be provided with a latch or lock unless it is panic hardware.
 4. When tents or membrane structures are approved for use, curtains shall not be allowed to cover the exits.
 5. Emergency lighting shall be provided in exit pathways. Emergency power shall be provided by fresh batteries and/or by generator.
 6. Exhibits and decorative materials shall not obstruct, confuse, or obscure exits, exit pathways, exit signs or emergency lights.
 7. Additional exit pathway markings, such as low level exit signs and directional exit path markings, may be required.
 8. For occupant loads of 50 or more the exit path shall be at least 44 inches wide. For occupant loads less than 50 the exit path shall be at least 36 inches wide. (CFC Table 1020.2) The path does not necessarily have to be in a straight line. CFC 1005.1 may require that the path be wider.
 9. In a tent, the distance to an exit from any point shall not be more than 50 feet. (N103.2) In a building, the distance to an exit from any point shall not be more than 75 feet (CFC Table 1006.3.2.2).
- N. N103.7.5 **Portable fire extinguishers.** Fire extinguishers shall have a minimum 2A:10B:C rating and be currently tagged. Fire extinguishers shall be properly mounted and shall be visible and accessible at all times. Locations of fire extinguishers will be clearly identified with signs or reflective tape. Fire extinguishers shall be located within 50 feet of travel distance from anywhere in the building or tent and in other locations as required by the Fire Official.
- O. N103.8 **Electrical.** When required, a permit shall be obtained from the local building official.
- P. N103.8.1 **Extension cords.** Extension cords shall be UL listed and shall be appropriate for the intended use. An extension cord shall not be plugged into another extension cord. Amperage of an extension cord shall be adequate for the electrical equipment being powered. Extension cords shall comply with all applicable provisions of CFC 605.
- Q. N103.8.2 **Power strips (power taps).** Only UL listed power strips with overcurrent protection shall be used when the number of site outlets provided is inadequate. Power strips shall be plugged directly into an outlet and shall not be plugged

into one another in series. Power strips shall comply with all applicable provisions of CFC 605.

- R. N103.8.3 **String lighting.** Manufacturer's guidelines for installation shall be followed. String lighting shall not exceed the maximum allowable number of string lights that can be connected as directed by the manufacturer. When connecting string lights together, the total amperage of all string lights shall be calculated to ensure that they do not exceed the amperage for the extension cord and circuit.
- S. N103.8.4 **Wiring protection.** All extension cords and power strips shall be adequately protected from foot traffic against tripping hazards and for damage to the cord.
- T. N103.8.5 **Portable generators.** When portable generators are utilized, they shall be diesel fuel type only. Fuel and generators shall be located a minimum of 20 feet away from all structures and shall be secured against tampering and vandalism.
- U. N103.9 **Decorative materials.** Interior wall, ceiling, and floor finishes shall be Class A rated in accordance with CFC 803.1.1.
- V. N103.9.1 **Flame retardant.** All decorative materials shall be inherently flame retardant and labeled as such, or shall be treated with a listed flame-retardant material. If the material is treated by the user, the container and receipt will be kept.
- W. N103.9.2 **Flame test.** Testing shall be done in accordance with CFC 803.5, as referenced from the California Code of Regulations, Title 19, Division 1, Article 3, Section 3.21(a) and (b). Permittee shall provide official results of testing to the Fire Official if requested. The Fire Official may take random samples for flame testing.
- X. N103.9.3 **Placement of decorative materials.** Decorative materials, props and/or performer platforms shall not obstruct, confuse, or obscure points of exit, exit signs, exit pathways, emergency lighting or any component of fire protection systems and equipment (i.e. fire extinguishers, fire alarm systems, fire sprinklers, etc.) inside or outside the building.
- Y. N103.10 **Smoke generators.** Use of smoke-generating equipment may be restricted if determined to be incompatible with smoke alarm(s) or if unreasonable patron confusion may result. Care and consideration shall be used with respect to smoke generator and smoke alarm locations. Smoke generator and smoke alarm locations shall be approved by the fire department.
- Z. N103.11 **Display of motor vehicles.** Display of motor vehicles shall be in accordance with CFC 314.4 and CFC 3104.18.
- AA. N103.12 **Inspections.** A fire and life safety inspection shall be conducted by the fire department prior to the initial opening of the event. Daily inspections may be required by the fire department. The event shall not open for public use until authorized by the fire department.
- BB. N103.13 **Signs.** "NO SMOKING" signs shall be conspicuously posted at the main entrance and throughout the exhibit.
- CC. N103.14 **Prohibited areas.** Inside storage or use of flammable and/or combustible liquids, gases, and solids shall be prohibited. Open flames shall be prohibited.

DD. N103.15 **Maintenance.** Good housekeeping shall be maintained at all times throughout the exhibit and along exit pathways. Points of exit and exit paths shall not be obstructed or present a tripping hazard.

FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS

EE. N103.7.1 **Fire sprinkler system.** Except when the total floor area is less than 1,000 square feet and the travel distance to an exit is less than 50 feet, an automatic fire sprinkler system shall be required for haunted houses, indoor portions of ghost walks, and special amusement buildings. Fire sprinkler systems shall be in accordance with CFC 903.

FF. N103.7.2 **Automatic smoke detection system.** Except when the total floor area is less than 1,000 square feet and the travel distance to an exit is less than 50 feet, an approved automatic smoke detection system shall be provided in accordance with Section 907.2.12 as required for amusement buildings.

GG. N103.7.3 **Alarm notification.** Activation of any single smoke alarm, the automatic sprinkler system, or any other automatic fire detection device shall immediately activate an audible and visible alarm at the building at a constantly attended location from which emergency action can be initiated, including the capability of manual initiation of requirements in CFC 907.2.12.2.

HH. CFC 907.2.12.2 **System response.** The activation of two or more smoke alarms, a single smoke alarm equipped with an alarm verification feature, the automatic sprinkler system, or other approved fire detection device shall automatically:

1. Cause illumination of the means of egress with light of not less than 1 footcandle (11 lux) at the walking surface level;
2. Stop any conflicting or confusing sounds and visual distractions;
3. Activate an approved directional exit marking that will become apparent in an emergency; and
4. Activate a prerecorded message, audible throughout the special amusement building, instructing patrons to proceed to the nearest exit. Alarm signals used in conjunction with the prerecorded message shall produce a sound which is distinctive from other sounds used during normal operation.

II. CFC 907.2.1 **Manual fire alarm system.** Where the occupant load in an assembly occupancy is 300 or more a manual fire alarm system that activates the occupant notification system in accordance with CFC 907.5 shall be installed.

JJ. CFC 907.2.12.3 **Emergency voice alarm communication system.** An emergency voice/alarm communication system, which is also allowed to serve as a public address system, shall be installed in accordance with CFC 907.5.2.2 and be audible throughout the entire special amusement building. (In many cases, one or more battery powered "bull" horns will meet this requirement.)