

FIRE CODE AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR GENERAL SPECIAL EVENTS

Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo Emergency Services – Fire Prevention Branch



EMERGENCY PLANNING:

- Organizers planning special events held within or outside buildings which deviate from regular operations of the space or building shall prepare an emergency response plan (ERP) specific to the event itself. The ERP is to include the following information and must be **submitted to the Fire Prevention Branch at least 10 business days before the event.**
 - Emergency contact numbers for organizers of the event.
 - What to do in case of an emergency (fire or medical) complete with contingency plans.
 - Detailed floor plans and layout of the special event.

The following is a standard guide for event organizers to ensure occupant safety and compliance with the National Fire Code, 2019 Alberta Edition and Regional Emergency Services' requirements for special events.

Please read this guide carefully, as these items will be reviewed for compliance during required routine walkthroughs conducted by Regional Emergency Services' personnel, prior to the commencement of the event. Should you have any questions or concerns in meeting compliance requirements, contact the Fire Prevention Branch at 780-792-5519

Code References

- All National Fire Code, 2019 Alberta Edition [NFC(AE)] references are from Division B, unless noted otherwise.
- All National Building Code, 2019 Alberta Edition [NBC(AE)] references are from Division B, unless noted otherwise.
- All National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards are referenced in the [NFC(AE)].
- Records of tests, inspections, maintenance or operational procedures required under the AFC shall be kept on the premise for a minimum of two years for examination by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ). [NFC(AE), Division C, 2.2.1.2 (4)]

INDOOR SPECIAL EVENTS:

OPEN FLAMES AND PYROTECHNICAL DISPLAYS

- Open flames and pyrotechnical displays require permits through the Fire Prevention Branch. Compliance and minimum requirements with these activities will be addressed upon permit application.
- Permit applications can be found at www.rmwb.ca/fireprevention.

FIRE DEPARTMENT ACCESS

- Fire department access to buildings and laneways must be maintained for fire department vehicles at all times. [NFC(AE) 2.5.1.5.]
- Fire department connections for sprinkler and standpipe systems shall be kept free of obstructions; this includes storage of combustible materials and parking of vehicles. [NFC(AE) 2.5.1.4.]

FIRE ALARM SYSTEM

- Fire alarm systems must always be maintained in operable condition at all times. [NFC(AE) 6.3.1.1.]
- Fire alarm devices (smoke and heat), signaling devices (horns, strobes and bells) as well as initiating devices (pull stations) shall remain unobstructed. [NFC(AE) 6.3.1.1.]

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

- At least one 2A:10BC or larger fire extinguisher shall be available and to which there is a maximum travel distance of 25 m.
- Where combustibles materials are placed inside a building for a special event, additional fire extinguishers meeting minimum ratings shall be provided and spaced evenly to accommodate the added fuel load in the building. [NFPA 10 "Standard for Portable Fire Extinguishers".]
- Decorations, or displays for the purpose of the special event shall not obstruct fire extinguishers from view or access.

EXITS

- Exits and exit doors must be clearly visible at all times and free of storage accumulation. [NFC(AE) 2.7.1.6.]
- The exterior of all exit doors shall also be free of storage and accumulation of snow and ice. [NFC(AE) 2.7.1.7.]
- All locking, latching or other fastening devices on exit doors must permit the door to be readily opened from the inside requiring no keys, special devices, or specialized knowledge of the door opening mechanism. [NBC(AE) 3.4.6.16.]

OPEN FLOOR AREAS

- Open floor areas intended for the gathering of occupants during a special event are subject to maximum occupant load requirements and certificate issuance by a Member of the Fire Prevention Branch.
- Seating and table arrangements shall conform to the NFC(AE) Section 2.7 Safety to Life.

Seating Arrangements for Under 200 Persons:

- Isles shall be located so that there are not more than 7 seats between every seat and the nearest aisle.

Seating Arrangements for Over 200 Persons:

- the seats in a row shall be fastened together in units of no fewer than 8 seats or,
- where there are 7 seats or fewer in a row, all the seats in the row shall be fastened together.

Isle Arrangements:

- 400 mm distance shall be provided between the back of a row of chairs and the next forward projection of the following row of chairs.
- Aisles shall be a minimum width of 1100 mm.
- Dead-end aisles no longer than 6 m.

Tables and Chairs:

Where tables are arranged in rows, the spacing between the nearest edges of tables in 2 successive rows shall not be less than:

- 1400 mm where seating is arranged on both sides of the tables or,
- 1100 mm where seating is on one side only.

DECORATIVE MATERIALS

- Decorative materials added to walls and ceiling shall meet the minimum flame-spread rating requirements of the surfaces on which they are located. [NFC(AE) 2.3.1.3.]
- Any decorative and festive materials added in assembly occupancies, including but not limited to crepe paper decorations, drapes, curtains or other combustible trimmings or ornaments and Christmas trees, shall be of flame-resistant type, or conform to CAN/ULC-S109, "Flame Tests of Flame-Resistant Fabrics and Films. [NFC(AE) 2.3.1.3. & 2.3.2.1.]

OUTDOOR SPECIAL EVENTS:

FIREWORKS AND PYROTECHNICAL DISPLAYS

- Fireworks and pyrotechnical displays require permits from the Fire Prevention Branch. Compliance and minimum requirements with these activities will be addressed upon permit application.
- Permit applications can be found at www.rmwb.ca/fireprevention.

OPEN FLAMES AND SMOKING

- Open flame devices and smoking shall not be permitted in a tent or air-supported structure while it is occupied by the public. [NFC(AE) 2.9.3.3.]

TENTS AND AIR-SUPPORTED STRUCTURES

- Tents and air-supported structures, bleachers and raised platforms shall be constructed in conformance with the NBC(AE).
- Where a tent or air-supported structure is designed to accommodate more than 1000 persons, a fire alarm system and voice communication system shall be provided. [NFC(AE) 2.9.3.5.]

ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS

- Electrical systems and equipment in a tent or air supported structure shall be maintained and operated in accordance with the electrical regulations made pursuant to the Safety Codes Act. All electrical equipment shall be inaccessible to the public. [NFC(AE) 2.9.3.1.]
Cables on the ground shall be placed in trenches or protected by covers. [NFC(AE) 2.9.3.1.]

FIRE WATCH

- A person shall be employed for no other duties than for fire watch when a tent or air-supported structure is occupied by more than 1000 persons. [NFC(AE) 2.9.3.4.]

FIRE DEPARTMENT ACCESS

- Fire department access to buildings and laneways shall be maintained for fire department vehicles at all times. [NFC(AE) 2.5.1.5.]



FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

- All tents and air-supported structures shall be equipped with fire extinguishers meeting the requirements of NFPA 10 “Standard for Portable Fire Extinguishers”.
- All fire extinguishers shall be serviced and tagged annually by a certified fire extinguisher company. [NFC(AE) 6.2.1.1.]

EXITS

- Where only one exit is provided in a tent or air-supported structure, the maximum occupant load shall be 60 to which there is a maximum travel distance to an exit of 15 meters. [NBC(AE) 3.4.2.1]
- Exits and exit doors must be clearly visible at all times and free of storage accumulation. [NFC(AE) 2.7.1.6.]
- The exterior of all exits shall also be free of storage and accumulation of snow and ice. [NFC(AE) 2.7.1.7.]
- All locking, latching or other fastening devices on exit doors must permit the door to be readily opened from the inside requiring no keys, special devices, or specialized knowledge of the door opening mechanism. [NBC(AE) 3.4.6.16.]

DECORATIVE & COMBUSTIBLE MATERIALS

- Decorative materials added to walls and ceiling shall meet the minimum flame-spread rating requirements of the surfaces on which they are located. [NFC(AE) 2.3.1.3.]
- Any decorative and festive materials added in assembly occupancies, including but not limited to crepe paper decorations, drapes, curtains or other combustible trimmings or ornaments and Christmas trees, shall be of flame-resistant type, or conform to CAN/ULC-S109, “Flame Tests of Flame-Resistant Fabrics and Films.” [NFC(AE) 2.3.1.3. & 2.3.2.1.]
- Hay, straw, shavings or similar combustibles shall not be permitted within a tent or air-supported structure, except that saw-dust or shavings may be used if kept damp. [NFC(AE) 2.9.3.2.]
- The ground enclosed by a tent or air-supported structure and for not less than 3 m outside the structure shall be cleared of all flammable material or vegetation that will spread fire. [NFC(AE) 2.9.3.2.]

OPEN FLOOR AREAS

- Open floor areas intended for the gathering of occupants during a special event are subject to maximum occupant load requirements and certificate issuance by a Member of the Fire Prevention Branch. Seating and table arrangements shall conform to the NFC(AE) Section 2.7 Safety to Life.

Seating Arrangements:

- Maximum 15 seats between every seat and the nearest aisle.

Isle Arrangements:

- 400 mm distance shall be provided between the back of a row of chairs and the next forward projection of the following row of chairs.
- Aisles shall be a minimum width of 1200 mm.
- Dead-end aisles no longer than 6 m.

Tables and Chairs:

Where tables are arranged in rows, the spacing between the nearest edges of tables in 2 successive rows shall not be less than:

- 1400 mm where seating is arranged on both sides of the tables or,
- 1100 mm where seating is on one side only.

Please note: Depending on the type and scale of the intended special event, further requirements may apply.