

# SPECIAL AMUSEMENT BUILDINGS, HAUNTED HOUSES AND OTHER SIMILAR OPERATIONS

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## **COLORADO SPRINGS FIRE DEPARTMENT** Division of the Fire Marshal



If you have any questions or comments regarding the information contained within, or if you need assistance interpreting these requirements, please contact:

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## PURPOSE

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To provide safety standards and regulations for the construction and operation of haunted houses and other similar operations.

## SCOPE

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These regulations shall apply to temporary special amusement buildings, haunted houses, ghost walks, or similar operations where combustible decorative material and/or confusing layouts, sounds and/or visual effects are present. Any event that is conducted completely outdoors, under open air, is not part of the scope of this document.

## DEFINITIONS

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**Special Amusement Building/Haunted House** A temporary or permanent building, structure or portion thereof, which contains a system that transports 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 distraction or an internally confounded egress path, or is not readily available because of the mode of conveyance through the building or structure.



**Decorative Materials.** Shall include materials such as decorations, curtains, draperies, streamers, fabrics, saw dust, wood shavings, cotton batting, backdrops, straw, hay, films, combustible props, vines, leaves, stalks, trees, moss, plastic, carpeting, rugs and wood materials less than ¼ inch nominal thickness. Including surface coverings applied over interior finish materials for acoustical or decorative purposes.

**Ghost Walk** Similar to the Haunted House and may include inside and outside portions where egress to a public way is obscured or limited.



**Public Way** A street, alley or other parcel of land open to the outside air leading to a street that has been deeded, dedicated or otherwise permanently appropriated to the public for public use.

## GUIDELINES

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### I. Permits and Plans

A Special Event revocable permit is required to operate a Haunted House within the City of Colorado Springs. To obtain this permit, a permit application, site and/or construction plans shall be submitted, along with other required information, to the Division of the Fire Marshal a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the start of the event. It is strongly suggested that a minimum of 4 weeks be provided for first time events to allow adequate time for potential issues to be worked out. A plan review and inspection fee is required to be paid when the application is submitted. Please contact the Division of the Fire Marshal for the permit fee amount.

Note that if the event is located within a temporary structure, such as a tent, additional permits and fees may be required. Contact the Division of the Fire Marshal if temporary structures will be utilized. Also see the *Tents, Temporary Membrane Structures and Canopies* information packet for submittal requirements.

In addition to the permit application, a site plan of the event must also be submitted. The site plan must include the following:

- Dimensional or scaled site plan (total square footage, width of exits, aisles or interior pathways, etc.) to indicate location of event and the proximity to other structures or hazardous areas, and path of travel from event building to public way.
- Location of temporary or permanent fire lanes serving structure being used in whole or part for the event.
- Locations of all exits, exit signs and emergency lighting, whether being used exclusively for the event or normal building operations.
- Locations of all fire extinguishers, whether being used exclusively for the event or normal building operations.
- Locations of all smoke detectors.
- Locations of all electrical panels serving power to event.
- Indication as to how power to specialized lighting, props, etc. will be provided. (extension cords, power strips, generators, wall outlets, etc.)
- Identification of the normal use of the structure, area or space. (Office, church, meeting room, auditorium, etc.)
- Indicate locations of any temporary walls or other similar obstructions. (no dead-ends permitted)
- Cross section of building with event if located within a permanent building, or indication of maximum height of event.
- Identification of all haunted areas. (chamber room, dungeon, torture chamber, etc.)
- Location of normal entry and exit of the event, as well as path of occupant travel through event.
- Identification of any/all materials being used. Identification of combustible materials whether fire treated or not. If fire treated, provide certifications and other pertinent information regarding treatment certification or application process.
- Identification of proposed occupant load for the event. Breakdown to include occupants and event workers for a total occupant load.
- Indication if any specialized props such as theatrical smoke machines which will be used and their locations.
- Written emergency procedure. (see Emergency Planning section below)

Once the plans have been approved, a fire inspection for the event must be scheduled. Due to inspection schedules, the inspection must be scheduled with a minimum of 3 business day's advance notice. The event may not take place until it has passed inspection and the permit has been issued.

## **II. Emergency Planning**

### **A. General**

A written emergency procedure shall be provided with the permit application documents. All employees of the event shall be trained in the emergency procedures contained within, to include the following at a minimum:

- Training of staff and what to do in the event of various emergencies including, but not limited to, fire, medical, unruly patron, etc.
- All staff shall be trained in the recognition of the fire alarm evacuation signal.
- The staff shall be trained to shut off event displays, distracting noises (sound system) and lights, and how to turn the house lights on in the event of any emergency.
- Notification procedures to patrons as well as appropriate emergency responders upon discovering an emergency.
- List of all staff member positions and their roles/responsibilities and general locations within the event.
- All staff shall carry flashlights and know the locations of all exits, fire extinguishers, light switches, electrical panels and emergency phones.
- Establishment of a Maze Master who is in charge of the entire event and has the authority to make decisions during the event. This person shall remain on site during hours of operation.
- Procedures for moving patrons through the event to include time spacing between groups, maximum number of patrons per group, whether groups are escorted or not, total number of patrons in the event at any given time.

The use of Colorado Springs Fire Department personnel, acting in the capacity as a fire watch, may be required if the emergency plan is inadequate or the event poses increased risk as determined by the Division of the Fire Marshal.

### **B. Exits**

- Two exits shall be provided from each room, area or space with an occupant load of 50 or more. Required exit doors shall swing in the direction of egress.
- Illuminated exit signage shall be provided at each exit serving an occupant load of 50 or more. Non-illuminated exit signage shall be used for all exits serving less than 50 persons.
- Panic hardware shall be provided for all exit doors serving an occupant load of 50 or more. No latches or locks are permitted.
- Emergency lighting with battery backup shall be provided in all rooms, areas or spaces where the occupant load exceeds 100 persons.
- Exhibits and decorative materials shall not obstruct, confuse, or obscure exits, exit pathways, exit signs or emergency lighting units.
- Additional egress marking, including low level marking, may be required at time of inspection.

### **C. Fire Protection**

- All haunted houses and similar structures utilizing a floor space greater than 1,000 square feet shall be equipped with an approved fire sprinkler system.
- Such sprinkler systems may not be altered or obstructed in any fashion.

- Approved smoke detection systems shall be provided throughout buildings where haunted houses and similar events are located.
- Sprinkler and smoke detection systems must be within 1 year of their annual inspection.
- Required fire extinguishers must be:
  - Minimum 2A:10BC
  - Properly mounted (about hip high)
  - Visible and readily accessible
  - 1 extinguisher per 3000sq. ft.
  - Placed within 75 feet travel distance of all points within the event

#### **D. Electrical**

- Extension cords shall be of heavy commercial type; UL listed, in good condition, and shall be appropriate for its use. (No zip cords)
- 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 (daisy chaining).
- All extension cords and power strips shall be adequately protected from foot traffic ('bridged') if paths of travel cannot be avoided.
- Extension cords shall not be covered in such a manner that facilitates heat build up.
- Emergency lighting shall be provided in the means of egress in case of power failure. Additional emergency lighting may be required if temporary walls or structures obstruct existing lighting units.
- A means to illuminate the entire area to facilitate any rescue or evacuation shall be provided.

#### **E. Decorative Materials**

- All decorative materials (decorations, drapes, backdrops and props) shall be both inherently flame retardant and labeled as such, or shall be treated with a flame retardant. If treated, copies of all pertinent information regarding the treatment must be submitted for review and acceptance.
- All decorative materials shall not obstruct any portion of any fire protection system and/or fire extinguisher. Required distances between fire sprinklers and obstructions must be maintained.
- If event is utilized within a sprinklered space, the event shall not include any ceilings or single horizontal obstructions greater than 4 feet wide which do not sit flat on the floor.

#### **F. Miscellaneous**

- No pyrotechnic effects, flame effects, open flames (lighters, candles), etc. of any kind are permitted within the event. LED candles, lights or similar devices are permitted and encouraged.
- Care and considerations shall be used with respect to theatrical smoke machines and smoke detector locations. The use of such devices may be restricted if determined to be incompatible with the smoke detection system.
- Good housekeeping practices shall be maintained throughout the duration of the event.
- Event lighting shall not be in close enough proximity to props as to pose a threat of heating the props.
- Approved "No Smoking of Open Flame" signs shall be placed at all entrances and exits of the event.
- Storage of flammable and combustible liquids, gases or solids are prohibited.
- Portable space heaters are prohibited within the event unless specifically approved by the Division of the Fire Marshal.