

Fire & Life Safety Guide for Special Events



Medicine Hat Fire and Emergency Services
2023

Special events

A special event can be any event held within or outside buildings which deviate from regular operations for which the space or building has been approved. These can include but are not limited to the following: home shows, trade shows, auto/boat/RV shows, concerts, rodeos, street festivals, fundraisers, large public celebrations, fairs, and any other special event of public assemblage.

Application review

Applications must be submitted at least 30 days prior to your event. A Fire SCO will review your application and contact you to confirm any necessary details. Approvals are subject to final inspection by a Fire Safety Codes Officer.

Floor plans / site plans

Plans shall include a detailed physical layout of the event and include individual tent/booth site plans. Floor and Site Plans must specify.

- Access to exits and exit locations
- Site / booth layout of the entire show
- Location of all tents / canopies
- Location and type of cooking booths, concessions or vendors
- Location and dimension of all isles and cross isles
- Size and location of stages or other performing areas
- Location and accessibility of all required fire extinguishers, pull stations or other safety equipment
- Outdoor emergency access routes – minimum 6m wide.

Special circumstances

If the following situations and/or circumstances are to occur during an event, detailed plans of use shall be included in the information package. Additional permits may be required.

1. Displays and operation/use of any open flame, candles, lamps, torches, cooking etc.
2. Fire performers using spinners or other flaming devices.
3. Use of Liquefied Petroleum Gas / Liquefied Natural Gas.
4. Use, handling or storage of any pyrotechnic materials or devices.
5. Temporary membrane structures, tents, canopies, or covered exhibit booths.
6. Display or use of any motorized or non-motorized vehicles in the public area.

Structures and exhibit booth requirements

1. Decorative material, including but not limited to; signs, banners, drapes, theatre curtains, acoustical material, hay/straw, split bamboo, shavings, mulch, canvas, cardboard, plastic displays etc shall not be used indoors or adjacent to crowds or along

exit routes unless they are made of non-flammable material conforming to CAN/ULC-S109, "Flame Tests of Flame Resistant Fabrics and Films," or treated and maintained in a flame retardant condition by means of a flame retardant solution to ensure that the material will pass the match flame test in NFPA 705, "Field Flame Test for Textiles and Films." Plastic cloth and certain other plastic materials, tar-paper, nylon, oilcloth, etc cannot be rendered flame retardant and are prohibited. Any decorative material may be subject to testing, materials in violation shall be immediately removed.

2. Combustible materials that are 10mm (3/8 inch) or more in thickness or glass may be used without flame retardant treatment. Exception: paper, cardboard, or foam products.
3. All electrical fixtures and appliances must be approved and carry the appropriate ULC or CSA listing:
 - a) Three wire grounded cords shall not be plugged into two wire extension cords.
 - b) Extension cords shall not run under carpets/rugs unless designed to be used in these locations.
 - c) There shall be sufficient clearance from lights or other heat sources to any combustible or display materials to prevent any possible ignition or heat damage.
 - d) All electrical plugs and extension cords must be of appropriate gauge, free from defects and designed to be used in the specific location. (eg. outdoors)
4. Booths that include tents, canopies and/or other structures inside a building shall not be constructed with any roof, ceiling, or other obstruction larger than 27.9m² (300 sq ft) without written approval of the MHFD Fire Prevention Bureau.
5. Booths that include tents, canopies and/or other structures inside a building having between 9.3m² (100 sq ft) and 27.9m² (300 sq ft) of roof, ceiling or other obstruction shall provide a listed single station smoke alarm.
6. Booths that include tents, canopies and/or other structures inside a building having between 9.3m² and 27.9m² of roof, ceiling and/or other obstruction with a source of ignition shall provide a listed single station smoke alarm plus a 2A-10BC fire extinguisher within.
7. Tents and canopies used indoors must be approved for indoor use and have a permanently attached label indicating conformance to CAN/ULC-S109, "Flame Tests of Flame Resistant Fabrics and Films."
8. Minimum of 3m separation is required between each 27.9m² aggregate of tents, canopies or other structures located indoors.
9. All required "EXIT" signs shall be visible from any location in a tent or room. Drapes, curtains, or displays shall not obstruct view of "EXIT" signs. Temporary directional "EXIT" signs may be required to clearly indicate the direction of egress.
10. Exits and aisles shall be clear and free of obstructions. Primary aisles at front and back of hall shall be a minimum of 3.5m wide, secondary aisles shall be a minimum of 2.5m wide.
11. Tents or enclosed areas which require 25m or more travel distance to reach an exit aisle shall have a minimum of two (2) exits remote from each other.

12. Fire extinguishers, standpipe connections and other fire appliances shall be maintained, clearly visible and accessible at all times.
13. The number of persons allowed within any event shall not exceed the occupant load permitted for the facility.
14. Pressurized tanks and other similar hazards shall be properly secured to prevent tipping over or damage.
15. Any additional requirements as determined by a Fire Safety Codes Officer.

Cooking & warming

1. Cooking and/or warming appliances shall be listed and labeled for commercial use by a recognized testing laboratory. (CSA or ULC)
2. Cooking or warming appliances used indoors shall be electric. Exception: approved commercial cooking appliances that use no more than (2) 10-ounce non-refillable LPG/butane containers or one 5lb propane cylinder connected directly to the appliance shall be allowed. Containers shall not be used with a manifold.
3. Chafing fuel may be used for warming trays, other open flame devices are prohibited indoors without appropriate permits from MHFD.
4. Cooking or warming appliances used indoors or in an enclosure (tent, trailer, or truck) that produce grease laden vapors must meet NFPA 96 requirements. "Standard for Ventilation Control and Fire Protection of Commercial Cooking Operations."
5. Cooking/warming appliances shall be isolated from the public having a minimum of 1m separation on all sides, or by providing a sturdy mounted separation shield between the appliance and the public.
6. Individual cookware and warming devices used indoors shall not exceed .5m x 1m (18in x39in) in area.
7. The surfaces, on which cooking/warming appliances are located, shall be constructed and arranged such that their proximity to combustibles will not pose a fire danger. When cooking equipment generates high temperatures the surface will be provided with adequate protection.
8. Fire protection shall be provided for any booth utilizing cooking/warming appliances. Each booth shall have the following fire protection equipment:
 - a) A mounted 2A-10BC extinguisher
 - b) A portable 'K' class extinguisher. (if using or producing grease laden vapors)
 - c) A smothering lid for each individual piece of cookware.
9. All extinguishers must be listed, labeled and tagged.
10. Cooking appliances must be placed on a stable base to limit the risk of the appliance tipping.

Outdoor tents

In addition to the cooking/warming section, cooking appliances and/or heaters may be used in a tent with the following provisions:

1. Tents must be CAN/ULC-S109 Flame Resistant certified.

2. No “open flame” cooking appliances or heaters are permitted in tents. Exception: chafing dishes
3. If grease laden vapors are being produced and NFPA 96 requirements are not met, appliances shall be located outside of tents and may be protected from weather by a non-combustible cover no larger than 3m². These appliances must be placed so they are a minimum of one meter from the outside tent wall and protected from public access.
4. Electric heaters may be used provided they are located a minimum of 1m from tent sides and ceiling.
5. LPG/LNG heaters must be located outside of the tent with suitable ducting used to supply warm air.

Outdoor canopies

In addition to the cooking/warming section, cooking appliances may be used under a canopy with the following provisions:

1. Canopies shall be CAN/ULC-S109 Flame Resistant certified.
2. Canopies shall be cleaned prior to set up.
3. A maximum of two cooking appliances that may produce grease laden vapors are permitted per canopy space of 3m².
4. There shall be a vertical clearance of at least 1m from the cooking appliance to the ceiling.
5. Canopies used for cooking shall be a minimum of 3m from any other tent, canopy, or building.
6. The public are not allowed to be under canopies being used for cooking.

Display of motorized & non-motorized vehicles

When motorized vehicles are to be displayed indoors the following will apply:

1. Vehicles shall not be started or operated within any assembly building during show hours.
2. All fuel tank openings shall be locked or sealed in an approved manner. Where it is not feasible to lock or seal the opening, the fuel tank should be empty. Draining of the tank shall not occur in a building.
3. Adding or removing fuel indoors is prohibited.
4. Vehicle fuel shall not exceed one quarter (25%) of the tank capacity or 20L, whichever is less.
5. Vehicles, boats, RV's, trailers, and similar exhibited products having over 9.3m² (100sq ft) of roofed area shall have a listed single station smoke alarm installed.
6. Vehicles, boats, RV's, trailers, and similar exhibited products between 9.3m² (100 sq ft) and 27.9m² (300 sq ft) of roof area, with a single source of ignition, external power or vehicle batteries still connected, shall have a listed single station smoke alarm installed and a 2A-10BC fire extinguisher.

7. Previously stated aisle widths of 3.5m primary and 2.5m secondary must be maintained without fishtailing. Clearance between RV's shall be at least 1.5m in all other locations. Measurements will be taken from closest point of each unit including slide-out and/or extended step.
8. Vehicles fueled by LPG/LNG/CNG are not permitted in assembly occupancies.

Inspection of the event

To maintain compliance with Fire and Life Safety requirements, periodic inspections may be conducted by a Fire Safety Codes Officer. These inspections may include:

- A walk-through inspection with the event coordinator during the move-in/set-up period with deficiencies corrected immediately or within agreed upon time frame.
- Once the event has opened, daily visits by a Fire SCO may be conducted.
- Cooking and motor vehicle displays may be spot checked by a Fire SCO.
- During the closing/move-out and removal of materials used in the event, a Fire SCO may inspect for emergency access and exiting.
- If the nature of the event requires a Fire SCO to be present, organizers will be billed at the current fee schedule.

We're here to help

For more info contact a Fire Safety Codes Officer:

P: 403-529-8282

E: fireprevention@medicinehat.ca.