



Fire & Building Safety

University of California, Merced
5200 N. Lake Rd.
Merced, CA 95348



Fire & Building Safety Guideline

SUBJECT: Special Events

PURPOSE: *Guidelines are established to facilitate compliance with applicable codes, standards, and regulations. Information contained herein applies to typical circumstances and may not address all situations.*

Guideline No. 005

Rev. Date _____

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Reference:

2022 California Building Code (CBC), 2022 California Fire Code (CFC), 2022 California Electrical Code (CEC), California Code of Regulations Title 19

Scope:

The Fire and Building Safety (FABS) team is responsible for enforcing certain code requirements pertaining to potentially hazardous activities, equipment, and structures commonly associated with special events. This guideline has been developed to provide clarification and support for organizations, staff, faculty, and members of the public who will be hosting or participating in a special event, whether located inside or outside University of California, Merced buildings/property.

While this list is not exclusive, the following activities require a special event permit:

- Temporary tents, canopies, and membrane structures (see Fire Building Guideline (FBG) 002).
- Any event where expected attendance is 50 or more, whether located inside or outside.
- Construction and use of temporary structures like haunted houses and mazes.
- Fireworks, spark machines, smoke machines, stage effects and pyrotechnics
- Special effects using fire, such as fire dancers, and other performances using fire.
- Campus space being used for other than normal purposes, including any activities not in compliance with the building certificate of occupancy (e.g., use of an instructional area for an overnight event)
- Carnivals fairs, festivals, and popup tent events
- Pit BBQs, bonfires, and campfires
- Use of candles or open flame for any venue
- Display of vehicles in places of assembly
- Cooking under a tent, canopy, or membrane structure; cooking vendors, or demonstrations

- Temporary generators
- Tabling (see FBG 001)
- Outside events utilizing a canopy
- Locations that could impact access by emergency vehicles, such as street or road closures, including obstruction of fire lanes.
- Overnight group outings not located in dorm facilities.

Definitions:

1. **Membrane structure** – An air-inflated, air supported, cable, or frame-covered structure as defined by the CBC and CFC, Chapter 31 and not otherwise defined as a tent.
2. **Tent** – A structure, enclosure, or shelter, with or without sidewalls or drops, constructed of fabric or pliable material supported by any manner except air or the contents it protects.
3. **Group A, Assembly (A Occupancy)** – Space designed for 50 or more occupants – the use of a building or structure or a portion thereof, for the gathering of persons for purposes such as civic, social or religious functions; recreation, food or drink consumption or awaiting transportation or *Motion Picture and Television Production Studio Sound Stages, Approved Production Facilities and production locations. Any building or structure or portion thereof used or intended to be used for the showing of motion pictures when an admission fee is charged and when such building or structure is open to the public and has a capacity of 10 or more persons.*

Submittal Requirements:

To ensure adequate time to process plans and issue permits, the following must be submitted to FABS a minimum of **10 business days** prior to the date of the event. In the case of haunted houses, grad night events, commencement, large events, such as Treats and Beats, Cowchella, and other similar activities, applications are required **20 business days** prior to the date of the event. All applications shall be submitted electronically to Citizenserve. The following information shall be provided, at a minimum, with each special event:

Exterior Plans:

Exterior plans are required for all activities/events. Include the following:

- Full property view with surrounding streets, other structures, fire hydrants, and fire department access roadways (Google Maps work well for this).
- Include a separate map showing street closures, if there will be any, and types of barricades.
- Provide distances between the event amenities, equipment, and other structures.
- Show the location of all tents/canopies on the plan (See FBG 002 for additional requirements).
- If applicable, identify areas where cooking or other activities will take place and the location of any generators or other amenities.
- Show fences, barriers, and other obstructions to pedestrian or vehicle access on site plan.

Interior Plans:

- Placement of fire extinguishers.
- Location and width of exit doors/openings.
- Location of exit, no smoking signs and other signage.
- Location of emergency lighting fixtures and their power source (battery, generator).
- Stages and platforms.
- Tables and seating layout, including width of aisles between tables/seating areas, including the measurement from the back of the seat to the front of the next seat.

Code Sections to Adhere To:

1. **Seat Stability CFC 1030.15** – Loose seats or folding chairs in quantities more than 200 shall be fastened together in groups of three or more when used for other than dining purposes. If using zip ties for fastening, the zip ties shall be secured to the front and back legs of the chairs.
2. **Number of Exits 2018 NFPA 101-12.2.4.4** – All fenced outdoor assembly areas shall have not less than two widely separated means of egress from the enclosure. Areas where the occupant load is more than 6,000 but less than 9,000 shall be served by not less than three means of egress, and areas where the occupant load is greater than 9,000 shall be served by not less than four means of egress. The factor for determining occupant load shall be seven square feet per person.
3. **Class K Portable Fire Extinguishers CFC 906.4** – Concession stands or vendors with cooking operations that include deep fat fryers shall provide a Class K wet chemical fire extinguisher. A minimum 2A:10BC fire extinguisher shall also be provided.
4. **Wet Chemical Systems CFC 904.5** – Automatic fire extinguishing systems installed for the protection of commercial cooking equipment must have a current service tag verifying that service in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations has been performed within the past six months.
5. **Stages – Portable Fire Extinguishers CFC 906** – All stages shall have access to a minimum of 2A10BC rated fire extinguisher within 75' of travel distance.
6. **Fire Extinguishers CFC 906** – Fire extinguishers with a minimum rating of 2A:10BC shall be located throughout the event. Maximum travel distance from any point within the event to a portable fire extinguisher shall not exceed 75' of travel distance. The fire extinguisher shall

have a current service tag or the fire extinguisher itself shall be stamped the current year of the use.

- 7. Portable Generators – Fire Extinguisher Requirements CFC 906 & 1204.10**– Each generator or generator area for portable generators shall be provided with at least one fire extinguisher with a rating of not less than 2-A:20-BC.
- 8. Extension Cords – CFC 603.6** – Temporary power cords shall not be affixed to structures, extend through walls, or subject to environmental or physical damage. Cords must be secured to prevent a tripping hazard. Large diameter cords must be provided with cord bridges or ramps to facilitate the crossing of wheelchairs, strollers, and similar wheeled equipment. Extension cords marked for indoor use shall not be used outdoors.
- 9. Decorative Materials – Title 19 §3.08** – In every group A, E, I, R-2, R-2.1, R-3.1 and R-4 occupancies all drapes, hangings, curtains, drops and all other decorative material, including Christmas trees, that would tend to increase the fire and panic hazard shall be made from nonflammable material, or shall be treated and maintained in a flame-retardant condition by means of a flame-retardant solution or process approved by the State Fire Marshal, as set forth in California Code of Regulations, Title 19, Division 1, Chapter 8. Exits, exit lights, fire alarm sending stations, wet standpipe hose cabinets, and fire extinguisher locations shall not be concealed, in whole or in part, by any decorative material.
- 10. Secured Gates and Barricades – CFC 503.5.1:** When required, gates and barricades shall be secured in an approved manner. Roads, trails, and other access ways that have been closed and obstructed in any manner shall be not be used unless authorized by the fire code official and UC Merced Police Department (UCMPD).
- 11. Obstruction of Any Roads, Including Fire Apparatus Access Roads – CFC 503.4:** Roads, including fire apparatus roads shall not be obstructed in any manner, including parking of vehicles without obtaining permission from FABS and UCMPD. A fire system impairment plan must be obtained prior to the obstruction of any road, fire lane, etc. Minimum road widths shall be maintained unless approved by the fire code official.
- 12. Obstruction – CFC 507.5.4:** Posts, fences, vehicles, growth, trash storage and other materials or objects shall not be placed within 15 feet of hydrants, fire department inlet connections or fire protections system control valves in a manner that would prevent such equipment or fire hydrants from being immediately discernible. The fire department shall not be deterred or hindered from gaining immediate access to fire protection equipment and hydrants.
- 13. Means of Egress Continuity – CFC 1003.6:** The path of egress travel along a means of egress shall not be interrupted by any building element other than a means of egress component as

specified in 1003. Obstructions shall not be placed in the minimum width or required capacity of a means of egress component except projections permitted by Chapter 10. The minimum width or required capacity of a means of egress system shall not be diminished along the path of egress travel.

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