PERMIT REQUIREMENTS FOR TRADE SHOWS

Since several regulations may apply to a trade show event, it is important that this handout is reviewed in its entirety.

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APPROVED BY: Michael D. Esparza

California Fire Code; NFPA101-13

Organizations desiring to hold a tradeshow or similar function in the convention center or similar indoor venue must obtain a permit from the Fire Prevention Bureau at least ten days prior to the date of the show. For an outdoor event, please see the handout for Outdoor Events.

The permit application must include a floor plan showing how the organization will utilize the space available for the show. This floor plan needs to show how halls, bathrooms, foyers, entries, and outside areas within 50' of the exits will be used.

Many activities related to trade shows are regulated by specific fire and life safety codes. Many hazardous activities, demonstrations, and/or processes, including but not limited to those listed below require a Fire Department permit. Please ensure that the description of the trade show specifically details all activities that will or could be present during the show.

A. Use of combustible decorations and materials;
B. Use of compressed gases, flammable liquids, propane, and liquefied petroleum gases;
C. Use of cooking/food warming operations and devices;
D. Use of candles, pyrotechnics, and heat producing processes;
E. Display of vehicles and use or demonstration of fuel powered equipment, and
F. Use of tents, canopies, and/or membrane structures.

Referenced Codes and Standards: California Fire Code; National Fire Protection Association

A. Combustible Decorations and Materials (CFC Section 807; NFPA 101-13)

1. Goods for sale during the trade show, educational materials, and product brochures are exempt from the flame-retardant requirement. These materials must be limited to a single day's supply and stored in an orderly fashion.
2. All combustible decorative materials must be made flame resistant in accordance with the requirements of the California State Fire Marshal using an approved flame-retardant chemical applied in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Materials that cannot be made flame resistant are prohibited.

A certificate of flame resistance, or manufacturer's specifications for the product used to make combustible materials flame resistant, shall be available for review by the Fire Department. Individual materials are subject to testing to ensure that they meet flame resistance standards.

B. Compressed Gases, Flammable Liquids, Propane, and Liquefied Petroleum Gases (CFC Sections 105, Chapter 30 & 38; NFPA 101-13)

1. Compressed flammable gases, flammable liquids, propane, and liquefied petroleum gases are not allowed inside of exhibit halls unless specifically approved by the Fire Department.
2. Compressed gas cylinders must be stored upright and secured to prevent them from tipping over.
3. Propane and other liquefied petroleum gases may be used for demonstration purposes when approved by the Fire Department.
4. Non-refillable LP-gas cylinders may be used for food cooking and preparation when specifically permitted by the Fire Department
5. The maximum amount of individual gases that may be used and/or present in exhibit halls is limited by the provisions of the fire code depending on the type and hazard classification of the gas.

C. Cooking/Warming Operations and Devices (CFC Section 906, 308,NFPA 101-13)

1. Cooking and food preparation shall be isolated from the public by not less than four feet or by a barrier between the devices and the public
2. Cooking appliances are to be electric powered. Non-refillable LP-gas cylinders may be used when specifically permitted by the Fire Department.
3. Cooking equipment using combustible oils shall have lids available for fire extinguishment, be limited to 288 square inches of cooking surface, be placed on a non-combustible surface, and be separated from each other by a horizontal distance of not less than two feet.
4. Vendors/Exhibitors conducting cooking and/or food preparation operations shall provide a fire extinguisher in the exhibit booth that has a minimum rating of 40B:C. A Class K wet chemical fire extinguisher is required for deep fat fryers.
5. Food warming by means of the use of Sterno or other approved material is allowed in exhibit booths. Exhibitor is to ensure that an appropriate clearance is maintained between warming fuel and combustible materials.

D. Candles, Pyrotechnics, and Heat Producing Processes (CFC Sections 105, 308, 3308, Chapter 26 NFPA 101-13)

1. Candles, open flame devices, and flame effects may be used for religious ceremonies, theatrical performances, and as decorative devices when specifically approved by the Fire Department. Vendors/Exhibitors shall comply with all Fire Code requirements for the use of open flame devices in places of assembly.
2. The possession, storage, handling, sale and/or use of pyrotechnic special effect devices is not allowed in exhibit halls unless specifically approved by the Fire Department. Vendors/Exhibitors shall comply with all requirements for the possession and use of pyrotechnic devices.
3. Use of an open torch, brazing, glass blowing, and similar operations, is not allowed in exhibit halls unless specifically approved by the Fire Department. Vendors/Exhibitors desiring to engage in these activities for demonstration and/or educational purposes shall comply with all Fire Code requirements for hot work.

E. Vehicles and Internal Combustion Engines on Display and Used in Demonstration (CFC Section 314)

1. Autos, trucks, motorcycles and other motorized vehicles displayed indoors shall have their batteries disconnected and terminals secured to prevent accidental contact that could create a current. Fuel in the fuel tank shall not exceed one quarter of the tank capacity or 5 gallons, whichever is less. Fuel tanks that contain or have ever contained fuel shall be furnished with a locking fill pipe cap and sealed to prevent the escape of vapors.
2. Garden tractors, chain saws, power plants, and other gasoline-powered equipment shall be handled and safeguarded in a manner similar to vehicles. Fuel shall be stored in an approved location outside of the building in an approved container with a spring cap and pressure relief capability. Refueling shall be performed outside of the building at an approved site.
3. The location of all vehicles, gasoline-powered equipment, generators, fuel storage, and refueling sites must be shown on the trade show floor plan and approved by the fire department in conjunction with the trade show permit.

F. Tents, Canopies, and Other Membrane Structures (CFC Section 105, chapter 24, NFPA 101-13)

1. Tents, canopies, and other membrane (air-inflated or air supported) structures less than 200 square feet may be displayed as part of a vendor exhibit without obtaining a separate fire department permit.
2. Vendors/Exhibitors desiring to use a tent or other membrane structure in excess of 200 square feet for the purpose of assembling people for entertainment, a demonstration, or a meeting within the trade show must apply for and be issued a separate permit in addition to the trade show permit.
3. Tents, canopies, and other membrane structures used indoors are limited to a maximum 300 square feet.

The attached handout is provided to make participants aware of the general fire and life safety regulations that pertain to trade shows. Please make copies as needed and distribute the handout to all participants.

Any questions regarding these minimum Fire Department regulations should be directed to the Fire Prevention Bureau by phone at 951-826-5737 or by letter to:

City of Riverside Fire Department
3900 Main Street 3rd Floor
Riverside, CA 92522
Fax (951) 826-2539

We thank you for your cooperation and wish you success with your show!