

Mason Building Department and the Mason Fire Department Fire Prevention Bureau

## **SPECIAL EVENTS POLICY**

In an effort to support consistent fire and life safety levels for the special events taking place in Mason, this policy has been established as a joint effort between the City of Mason Building Department and the City of Mason Fire Department Fire Prevention Bureau.

These recommendations are designed to meet the letter and intent of current minimum building and fire code safety standards and the safety record of previously enforced rulings. Recent changes for occupancies in Tents (Chapter 31 Ohio Fire Code, 2017 edition) have been incorporated into this policy in addition to changes to the 2024 Ohio Building Code and the National Electric Code, 2023 Edition. These recommendations are only for temporary outdoor special event structures, tents, and other membrane structures erected for a period of less than 180 days.

Although this list is meant to cover as many common electrical, fire, and fire safety conditions as possible, additional or unusual conditions may arise for which the building or fire official may request additional or alternate safeguards.

The deadline for general inspection appointments is 48 hours before occupancy, and the deadline before operation and/or occupancy for food booths is 24 hours.

### **FOR THE SITE LOCATION AND LAYOUT:**

1. Tent permits are required for all tents greater than 120 sq. ft. and must be acquired in advance of their erection. Applications for tent permits must have certificates for flame resistance that show passage of NFPA 701 of the tent fabric.
2. A minimum of 20 feet is required from a tent to any property line, buildings, cooking tents, parking, and generator sets and other gas-powered motors, measured from the guy ropes. A minimum of 50 feet is required between tents that have an aggregate area over 15,000 square feet. The separation from a building is not required when the total area of the tent plus the building is no more than the amount allowed as a total building by the Building Code. All cooking tents must be separated by at least 20 feet from all other tents.
3. A minimum of 12 feet of firebreak area is required on all sides of all tents or groups of tents, clear of guy ropes or other obstructions (except for permitted locations by buildings).
4. The seating arrangement must be in place in order to inspect aisle widths and exit routes for assembly occupancies (over 49 occupants). The maximum travel distance within the tent to any exit is 100 feet. Exits are required as follows:

June 1, 2025 (Twelfth Edition)



1-9 persons	1 exit	36 inches wide
10-199 persons	2 exits	72 inches wide each
200-499 persons	3 exits	72 inches wide each
500 and more	(see Ohio Fire Code)	

5. Illuminated exit signs and emergency lights are to be provided for assembly occupancy tents that have more than one required exit and side flaps on more than one side, and will be occupied beyond daylight hours. Emergency lighting is not required for daylight only occupancy.
6. Exit openings must be secured open or may be covered by a flame-resistant, free-sliding curtain in a contrasting color on a metal support. Moving or swinging flaps cannot be permitted as exit openings. If doors are used, they must swing in the direction of egress. The minimum aisle width is 44 inches (but can be more depending on occupant load). The minimum distance between tables with chairs is 60 inches (measured table to table) and increases with occupant load.
7. Fire lane signage must be provided where routes are subject to temporary obstruction by vehicles or equipment.
8. Egress entrances and equipment curbs to tents must be ramped where cords, ropes, and wires, etc. may present tripping hazards. Tie downs and guy ropes from tents cannot obstruct egress routes or be tripping hazards, inside or outside of the tents.
9. All tents must be anchored and braced to prevent collapse from wind forces.
10. Stages or raised platforms over 120 square feet must be permitted. Stages and platforms used in whole or part by the (e.g. graduations) must be accessible. Stages and platforms with sides or covers must have engineered plans sealed by a State of Ohio registered design professional.

#### **FOR ELECTRICAL SERVICE:**

11. Generators must be separated from tents by a minimum of 20 feet and shall be isolated from contact with the public by fencing, enclosure or other approved means. Fuel tanks must have Type BC fire extinguishers available.
12. The minimum extension cord size is 12 gauge, 3-wire (2-wire plus ground) listed for exterior use (hard usage rating). Cords should be a length corresponding to the distance as much as possible, so that stretching and/or coiling is minimized.
13. Extension cords cannot be spliced, or have unprotected connections resting directly on the ground. Cords cannot be tripping hazards, and larger conductors must have treadles or ramps. Connections and power strips shall be elevated and covered to minimize the chance of water interruption, unless listed devices for wet locations are used. Total load on power strips and multi-outlet extension cords cannot exceed the capacity of the cord being used. A heating or refrigeration unit will most likely require its own cord and circuit.

June 1, 2025 (Twelfth Edition)



14. Extension cords above ground must be stayed to the tent frames or other structure components. Cords shall not be hung from the equipment or be hanging where they obstruct normal access and operation.
15. Service equipment shall be mounted on a solid backing and be weatherproof (or weather-protected). Panel boxes must have covers or fences to prevent accidental contact and be inaccessible to the public.
16. Temporary string lights shall not have any dead ends with exposed wires. Overhead conductors must be at least 12 gauge and must be supported with messenger wire when the span exceeds 40 feet. The minimum height for electrical conductors is 10 feet over pedestrian areas and 18 feet over vehicle traffic areas. Splices and breaks are not allowed between drops. Overhead lights inside tents must have guards on the lamps.
17. Outlets must have weatherproof covers. Portable distribution and termination boxes must be weatherproof and mounted at least 6" above the ground. All receptacles must be GFCI protected, except for emergency egress lighting.
18. Concessions must have a fused disconnect or circuit breaker located within sight and within 6 feet of the operator, and the disconnect must be accessible whenever the concession is in operation.
19. The following equipment must be bonded when connected to the same source:
  - a. Metal raceways and metal sheathed cable,
  - b. Metal enclosures of electrical equipment,
  - c. Metal frames and metal parts of concessions, trailers, trucks, or other equipment that contain or support electrical equipment.
20. All equipment requiring grounding shall comply with Article 250 NEC. The equipment grounding conductor shall be bonded to the system at the service disconnecting means or generator disconnect.

#### **FOR EQUIPMENT AND GENERAL FIRE SAFETY:**

21. Flammable and/or combustible liquids must be in approved cabinets per the Ohio Fire Code.
22. Propane gas cylinders must be adequately protected to prevent tampering, damage by vehicles, and securely fastened in place. All propane tanks must be secured to posts or stakes, or in groups of three or more to prevent tipping and located at least 10 feet from the tent.
23. All grease-laden cooking and open flames must be outside of public tents and separated 20 feet minimum from the tent. Electric warmers and steamers are allowed under tents provided there are no open flames. Canned cooking fuel (e.g. Sterno) is allowed under tents at constantly attended locations only, and only for warming purposes. Flues must be at least 12 inches from tent fabric.



24. All tents must have clear access to minimum 5 lb. Type ABC fire extinguishers at an identified location within 75 feet, and in addition minimum 10 lb. Type K fire extinguishers are required to be mounted adjacent to all fuel-fired cooking areas.
25. Trash must be managed daily, with receptacles and dumpsters regularly emptied to prevent overflow or other attempts to exceed the container capacity. Dumpsters should be at least 30 feet from buildings and tents.

