



University of Maryland
Fire Marshal's Office
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Fire and Life Safety Planning and Management Guide for Public Assembly Events

Information and Assistance

General Information on Event Planning

On campus groups planning for events should begin by contacting the Stamp Event Services Office in Stamp Student Union (301.314.8488 or stamp365events@umd.edu). The office is open Monday through Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. For groups not affiliated with the university, contact Conference & Visitor Services (301.314.7884 or conferences@umd.edu).

Fire and Life Safety

All persons planning public assembly events are encouraged to contact the University of Maryland Fire Marshal's Office for information and assistance. Consultation is available by telephone, email, meeting, and at the event site.

In order to comply with the requirements of the State Fire Prevention Code, it is necessary for the Fire Marshal's Office to make certain approvals as noted in these guidelines. Required approvals and inspections should be requested as far in advance as possible.

Fire Marshals are required to be present for certain events such as indoor pyrotechnics, outdoor fireworks, and large scale events. Services are also provided for events with security concerns as requested by the sponsors and/or UMPD. When services are required or requested for events, a fee for services applies. Fee estimates are provided during event planning.

There is **no charge** for event planning, consultations, or random inspections.

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Definition of Public Assembly

Public assembly events involve various risk factors associated with having large numbers of people in one location. The primary risk factors are the high occupant density, occupants that are not familiar with the building, and in some cases darkness. These risks can be managed through proper event planning and management.

The State Fire Prevention Code defines a public assembly occupancy as follows:

Assembly occupancies include but are not limited to, all buildings or portions of buildings, used for gathering together **50 or more persons** for such purposes as deliberation, worship, entertainment, eating, drinking, amusement, or awaiting transportation. (NFPA 101 Life Safety Code)

Examples of assembly occupancies at the University of Maryland include large meeting rooms and classrooms, auditoriums with fixed or loose chair seating, multi-purpose rooms, concert halls, theaters, sports arenas, field houses, restaurants, bars, and libraries.

Tents Are Considered Buildings

Tents must meet most of the same requirements as buildings. Any tent larger than a 10'X10' pop-up must be inspected by the Fire Marshal's Office before being occupied. Please see the Guidelines for the Use of Tents.

Outdoor Spaces

Enclosed open areas such as Maryland Stadium must meet the same requirements as buildings. Fenced open areas must have at least two exits.

Bleachers, grandstands, and platforms must be certified as structurally sound by a registered professional engineer.

Large Scale Events

All events intended to, or that have the potential to, attract large crowds must be coordinated through any number of University departments and divisions. These include but are not limited to: Stamp Student Union Event & Guest Services; University of Maryland Police Department (UMPD) Special Events; Department of Transportation Services (DOTS); Facilities Management Special Services; Facilities Management Landscape Services; Dining Services; University Recreation & Wellness; Intercollegiate Athletics Facilities, Operations, and Events; and Environmental Safety, Sustainability & Risk (ESSR) Risk Management. Members of these departments and others comprise the Event Management Team which meets on a regular basis to coordinate events campus wide.

Fire and Life Safety Planning and Management Information

Room Capacity

Information on campus room capacities may be obtained from Stamp Event & Guest Services (301.314.8488) or the Classroom Scheduling Office (301.314.8240). It is the responsibility of the Fire Marshal's Office to determine legal capacities and post capacity certificates. Be aware that the occupant load is the maximum capacity based on the net clear floor area. Stages and other obstructions, seating arrangements and the use of tables will decrease the capacity. The type of event is also a determining factor. When planning for an event, consider the following:

<i>Use</i>	<i>Minimum area per person</i>
concentrated (concerts, dances, lectures)	7 sq ft per person
less concentrated (dining room, exhibit room)	15 sq ft per person
fixed seats	number of fixed seats
stage (persons on stage)	15 sq ft per person

Exits

The number of exits required is based on the capacity.

<i>Number of persons</i>	<i>Minimum number of exits</i>
50 - 499 persons	2 remote exits (minimum)
500 - 999 persons	3 remote exits (minimum)
1000 or more persons	4 remote exits

Exits must remain unobstructed and provide clear access to the outside at all times. Wires or cables are not permitted to be placed in front of exits or on steps. All wires or cables on floors must be properly taped down or covered to avoid tripping hazards.

Set-up Plans

The placement of stages, seats, equipment (including wiring), and security arrangements affect the exits and access to exits.

Standard set-up plans exist for the venues in the Stamp Union, Xfinity Center, Reckord Armory, Ritchie Coliseum and the dining halls. These plans are maintained by the management of the respective facilities. Set-up plans for other spaces, spaces that are not routinely used for public assembly (including lobbies and atriums), or any plans that are different from existing standard plans must be reviewed in advance by the Fire Marshal's Office for conformance with life safety regulations.

Temporary seats numbering more than 200 must be secured together. Temporary bleachers and platforms must be certified as structurally sound by a registered professional engineer.

Festival Seating

Festival seating refers to events with live entertainment offering general admission without the use of actual seats. The resulting high audience density may compromise public safety. It does not apply to conventions, dances, or political/educational/religious rallies.

Festival seating is permitted only in venues with an occupant load of 250 or less. In larger venues festival seating may be used if a life safety evaluation approved by the Fire Marshal's Office has been submitted.

Tents

Please review the detailed information in the Guidelines for the Use of Tents. Tent material must be properly certified as flame retardant. Some tents have attached labels. When labels are not attached, sponsors, promoters, or other production personnel must have documentation that certifies that the tent material is flame retardant. Certification must be based on NFPA 701, Standard Methods of Fire Tests for Flame Propagation of Textiles and Films.

Example Certificate

Flooring for tents must be non-combustible. Straw, hay, wood chips, mulch, or other similar materials are prohibited from use as flooring in tents. Example Flooring Certificate

Use of open flames (including those used for cooking or warming of food) and heaters must be approved in advance by the Fire Marshal's Office.

Tent suppliers must be able to certify that tents have been erected in accordance with manufacturer recommendations, industry standards, and code requirements.

Special Amusement Buildings

Any building or portion of building that is permanent, temporary, or mobile that is arranged as an amusement must be approved by the Fire Marshal's Office. Amusement arrangements are those where the exit path is not readily apparent due to visual or audio distractions. Examples include haunted houses, carnival amusement trailers, and escape rooms. The Maryland State Fire Marshal's Office has issued guidelines specific to haunted houses.

Expositions

Expositions of products or other displays have a number of special requirements. Contact the Fire Marshal's Office for consultation and event planning.

Exit Notices

The person in charge of a theater or place of assembly is required to call the attention of everyone present, immediately before the beginning of an event, to the location of exits and to state that the exits are not locked. The person in charge must also announce the following: "Notice. For your own safety, look for the nearest exit. In case of emergency, walk, do not run, to that exit."

The two requirements are considered complied with by one of the following methods:

1. Notices made orally
2. Notices shown with a projected image

Decorations and Theatrical Scenery

All materials used for decorations and theatrical scenery, including the drop used behind stages during concerts, must be Class "A" rated for flame spread. Sponsors, promoters, or other production personnel must have documentation that certifies that the material meets this requirement. Fire Marshals may ask to see these certificates prior to the start of an event.

If there is no documentation to certify that the material is acceptable, Fire Marshals may be requested to perform a "field flammability test." A small sample of the material is required for the test. Materials that fail the test must not be used.

Decorations must not block exits or fire safety equipment.

Proscenium Wall (Ina and Jack Kay Proscenium Theater)

Theatrical scenery, props, or sets may not be placed in front of the proscenium wall/fire curtain in the Ina and Jack Kay Proscenium Theater (Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center) without approval from the Fire Marshal's Office.

Candle and Open Flames

The Fire Marshal's Office must approve candles and open flames used during public assembly events for any purposes other than decoration and cooking (unless otherwise noted). This includes, but is not limited to, any candle or open flame used in the course of a performance.

Candles and open flames used for decoration and cooking are permitted when used in accordance with the Candle and Open Flame Requirements. Users are required to have adequate safety precautions and are encouraged to contact the Fire Marshal's Office for consultation.

Information on candle light vigils can be found in the Candle and Open Flame Guideline.

Candle and Open Flames are strictly prohibited within any campus residence.

Small open flames used by outdoor performers, such as jugglers, are approved on a case by case basis. Contact the Fire Marshal's Office for approval. Performers must be prepared to demonstrate their safety procedures and may be required to have insurance certificates.

Open Fires (outdoors)

Open Fires, with the exception of small contained cooking fires, are permitted on a limited basis require special permission from the Fire Marshal's Office and the Prince George's County Department of Health. Open fires must also be approved by Facilities Management Building and Landscape Services. Open fires are limited to the hours between 4:00pm - 12:00 midnight. Other environmental restrictions may apply.

Cooking Fire/Barbecue Grills

Cooking fires, which do not require a permit, must be at least 15 feet from buildings and be located so that smoke does not enter buildings.

Barbecue grills, please see Outdoor Grilling Information.

Pyrotechnics

The indoor and outdoor use of pyrotechnics is strictly regulated and requires proper approval and permits.

Indoor pyrotechnics and outdoor fireworks displays require a Public Display of Fireworks Permit issued by the Office of the State Fire Marshal. The event sponsor or producer must apply for the permit. The Fire Marshal's Office provides site approval for the permit and coordinates the application process. Fire Marshals also inspect the pyrotechnics/outdoor fireworks site on the day of the show for conformance with applicable fire codes. An application for the permit must be received by the State Fire Marshal at least 10 days before the scheduled event. The following must be obtained by the event sponsor or producer before a permit application is submitted to the Office of the State Fire Marshal :

1. Site approval by the Fire Marshal's Office
2. The services of a pyrotechnician licensed by the State Fire Marshal
3. A certificate of insurance for a policy acceptable to the State Fire Marshal (indicated on permit application) with University of Maryland and State of Maryland named as insured
4. \$50.00 application fee (check payable to State of Maryland)

Outdoor fireworks displays require large "safety zones." The basic requirement is 70 feet per inch of shell diameter. For example, a 6 inch shell needs 420 feet of clearance from spectators and occupied buildings. Please note that there are very few suitable locations available on campus that can accommodate an outdoor fireworks display.

Sparklers are not permitted on the grounds of University of Maryland.

Haze and Fog Machines

Use of haze and fog machines during a performance, dance, or other public assembly event may activate smoke detectors and/or obscure exits. Areas where haze or fog machines are going to be used must be evaluated so that accidental activation of the fire alarm system or obscuring of exits is avoided. Contact the Fire Marshal's Office for an evaluation.

In some cases, smoke detectors may need to be temporarily shut down in the area where a fog machine is used. Facilities Management needs advance notification to schedule an outage. Fire Marshals are required to perform a "fire watch" during the period in which the smoke detectors are temporarily out of service.

Event Staff/Crowd Managers

Crowd Managers are responsible for maintaining clear exits, assuring that there is no overcrowding, initiating a fire alarm if necessary, directing occupants to exits, and general fire and life safety awareness. A minimum of 1 Crowd Manager is required for every assembly and an additional 1 crowd manager for every 250 occupants. Crowd Managers may be comprised of ushers, house managers, gate personnel, security personnel, police aides, or police officers. Fire Marshal personnel are available to provide training.

Post Event Procedures

At least one person should be responsible for completing a post event check. Items to check for include safely extinguished smoking materials (where smoking is allowed), open flames safely extinguished (where open flames are approved), unnecessary electrical equipment turned off, and any obvious hazardous conditions. This is extremely important in Greek houses and other residential facilities.

Generators

Generators must meet all electrical code requirements including proper grounding. All wires that may pose a tripping hazard must be covered or otherwise secured. Generators must be located so that exhaust does not enter buildings or tents.

Insurance

Proof of insurance maybe required for outside groups/events that come to the University. Events sponsored by University student groups that pose substantial risks to non-University participants (i.e., auto rallies, car smashing, fire jumping) may also require proof of insurance. Insurance issues may be handled as part of a contract for events such as concerts. The ESSR Risk Management Insurance Coordinator (301.405.3964) can provide information on University insurance requirements. ESSR Risk Management coordinates all University insurance claims involving injury and/or property damage.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

EMS is required for events based on the type of event, anticipated crowd size, and past history of an event. The number and level of EMS providers is determined by the Fire Marshal's Office, and/or UMPD during pre-event planning. Events of over 2000 persons require a minimum of one ambulance. Events of over 7000 persons require a minimum of 2 ambulances. Ambulances are provided by a contract ambulance service. Additional EMS personnel may be provided by Intercollegiate Athletics TerpHost EMT's. Contact the Fire Marshal's Office to arrange for EMS.

Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)

There are many requirements pertaining to OSH for persons employed by the University and persons working at the University on a contract basis. Personnel should only be working with equipment and procedures for which they have been trained. Arrangements should be made to provide University personnel working at concerts and other loud locations with approved hearing protection. Information and assistance can be obtained by contacting ESSR Occupational Safety and Health (301.405.3960).

Summary of Required Permits and Approvals

Item	Required
Set-up Plans	UMD Fire Marshal approval
Indoor Pyrotechnics/Outdoor Fireworks	State Fire Marshal permit, UMD Fire Marshal approval
Open Flames	UMD Fire Marshal approval
Open Fires (outdoor)	UMD Fire Marshal permit, Prince George's County Department of Environmental Resources permit
Tents	Flame retardant certification, Structural integrity certification
Decorations	Flame retardant certification, Structural integrity certification
<u>Temporary Bleachers, Grandstands, and Seating (Indoor and Outdoor)</u>	Structural integrity certification
Special Amusement Arrangements	UMD Fire Marshal approval
Insurance	Certificate for pyrotechnics/fireworks

Public Assembly Event Self-Check

Public Assembly Event Self-Check Form <i>Fire and Life Safety</i>	Fire - Police - Rescue 911 UMPD Non-emergency (301) 405-3555 Fire Marshal - page through UMPD
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Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Event: _____ Person Doing Check: _____

Exit announcement read, displayed or posted? Yes No - provide announcement

Exit doors clear and unobstructed (on both sides)? Yes No - remove obstructions

Exit paths clear and unobstructed all the way to outside? Yes No - remove obstructions

Wires taped down or otherwise secured? Yes No - tape down wires n/a

Aisles clear and unobstructed? Yes No - remove obstructions

Exit lights on and unobstructed? Yes No - remove obstructions

Emergency lights unobstructed ? Yes No - move obstructions

Floor set-up approved? Yes No - contact Fire Marshal n/a

Fire protection equipment unobstructed ? Yes No - remove obstructions

- fire alarm pull stations
- fire alarm horns, bells, or speakers, and flashing lights
- fire extinguishers

Decorations non-flammable? Yes No - remove decorations n/a

Use of open flames approved? Yes No - safely extinguish open flames n/a

Use of pyrotechnics approved? Yes No - contact UMPD and Fire Marshal immediately

Crowd managers in place? Yes No - contact Fire Marshal

- 1 crowd manager for every 250 occupants

Tents have proper certifications? Yes No - contact Fire Marshal n/a

- flame retardant certification
- structural integrity

Emergency Medical Services in place? Yes No - contact UMPD and Fire Marshal

- over 2000 people, 1 ambulance
- over 7000 people, 2 ambulances

Post-event check completed? Yes No - perform post event check

- smoking materials safely extinguished (where smoking is allowed)
- approved open flames safely extinguished
- unnecessary electrical equipment turned off
- no obvious hazards