

Planning Your Event

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Fees

View the AFD Special Event fees [here](#).

Permit Revision Fee

A Special Event Permit Revision fee will be charged whenever changes are made to a completed or in-progress event review (changes to original site plans for special events). Changes deemed excessively significant may require a new ACE application.

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Fire Lanes

Emergency vehicle access roads shall have an unobstructed width of no less than 25 feet.

The unobstructed roadway width may be reduced to less than 25 feet for all or part of the required roadway. The Fire Chief has the authority to require an increase or permit a decrease in access widths when necessary to meet public safety objectives.

Fire Lane Vertical Clearance

An unobstructed vertical clearance of no less than 14 feet must be maintained on all overhead obstructions above any fire lanes at all times. This includes those positioned over roadways including, but not limited to: event starting lines, overhead banners, and/or event entry structural support systems.

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Generators

Minimum requirements (A site review may determine additional requirements.)

- Must be located 10 feet from any permanent structure.
- Must be located 20 feet from any tent or temporary membrane or air inflated structure.
- Must not be located on any sidewalk or within 10 feet of a building exit or egress path unless otherwise approved.
- Locations of all generators must be indicated on any site plans.
- Generators must be allowed to cool down prior to refueling
 - Generators less than 10 gallons may be refueled during normal hours provided refueling is 25 feet from the public.
 - Generators over 10 gallons must be refueled when the public is not present.
- Generators must be protected from public access.
- "No Smoking" signs must be posted around the generator and any stored fuels.
- Less than 10 gallons of fuel may be stored onsite.
 - Must be stored 50 feet from any tent or temporary membrane or air inflated structure.
- Generators with less than 60 gallons of fuel must have a 2A:10BC or larger fire extinguisher within a 30 foot distance of the generator.
- Generators with more than 60 gallons of fuel must have a 2A:20BC or larger fire extinguisher within a 30 foot distance of the generator.
 - Generators with more than a 60 gallon tank require the tank to be labeled and list to meet UL 142 specifications.
- Maximum fuel capacity for any generator is 660 gallons.

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Permits

Carnival/Circus Operational Permit

An operational permit is required to operate a circus or carnival with an expected attendance of more than 50 people.

An ACE application is required to be submitted at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the event or according to the SEO's deadline for the tier of the event (whichever is greater).

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Exhibit & Trade Show Permit

Exhibit and Trade Show permits are required by the International Fire Code. The City of Austin requires facilities to meet specific life safety standards when hosting these types of events.

Exhibits and trade shows are defined as, “any event with temporary vendor displays or booths.” Also included would be “any configuration that deviates from the normal use of the space, including sectioning to reduce the size of the original space and/or a configuration which obstructs the exits and/or egress pathways within the space (e.g., fence, structures, pipe and drape, or other barriers).”

Permits may be required for facilities that host exhibits and trade shows to include: convention centers, event centers, arenas, hotels with ballrooms or meeting rooms, and/or any other A-2 or A-3 occupancies.

To obtain the permit, a complete [online application](#) and floor plan submission must be submitted at least 21 days prior to the event.

See our [Exhibit and Trade Show Information Bulletin](#) for more information.

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Fireworks Permit

All activities associated with the use of pyrotechnics and open flames must comply with the current IFC and adopted ordinances, and require review and approval by the Austin Fire Department (i.e., outdoor fireworks and pyrotechnics.).

Those requesting the use of aerial fireworks and/or pyrotechnics must fill out an ACE application at least 30 days prior to the scheduled event or according to the SEO’s deadline for the tier of the event (whichever is greater).

A PERMIT, ALONG WITH THE FOLLOWING, IS REQUIRED IN ORDER TO PROMOTE OR EXECUTE A COMMERCIAL OR CONSUMER FIREWORKS DISPLAY WITHIN THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

- A site plan of the grounds where the display is to be held must be submitted to and approved by AFD Special Events in advance of the event.
- A copy of a pyrotechnic operator license issued by a State Fire Marshal’s Office (commercial only).
- A list of the fireworks to be used along with an MSDS for each (commercial only). Consumer displays are restricted to only ground devices containing 50mg or less of explosive composition and smoke devices classed as explosive 1.4G, firecrackers, and small smoke bombs.
- Insurance
 - Aerial displays must carry a Certificate of Insurance for a minimum of \$1,000,000 (bodily injury) and \$500,000 (property damage).
 - Non-aerial displays must carry a Certificate of Insurance for a minimum of \$500,000 (bodily injury) and \$300,000 (property damage). The City of Austin must be named as co-insured on the policy.
- A permit fee, along with the required apparatus and inspector standby, depending on the type of display.

- A [Public Display permit](#) must be obtained from the State Fire Marshal's Office (commercial only).

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Flame Effect/Open Flame Performance Requirements

A flame effect is the combustion of flammable solids, liquids and/or gases to produce thermal, physical, visual and/or audible phenomena before an audience (i.e., hand-held burning torches, flaming batons or hoops, flame acts, fire walking, flaming sword dancers, open burning with religious services, candles or open flames in assembly occupancies, and fire or special effects for film productions). A full demonstration to the Fire Marshal prior to the event date may be required.

Those hosting events **with 50 or more people** must fill out an ACE application; the deadline is either the greater of 30 days or the SEO's deadline for the tier of the event (whichever is greater).

Events **with less than 50 people** must fill out the standalone [Open Flame application](#) no less than 10 days prior to the event.

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Food Truck Permit & Inspection

Food trucks must operate under a valid City of Austin and/or Travis County Mobile Vending Permit in accordance with all of the rules and regulations of the Public Health. Food truck operators may not expand operations to areas outside of the mobile food establishment.

If you plan to have a food truck at your event, you are not required to obtain additional health permits. However, it is your responsibility to ensure those food trucks have the proper permits onsite.

Familiarize yourself with the [AFD Mobile Food Vending Checklist \(Spanish\)](#). All mobile vendors/trailers at special events are subject to a fire inspection; food trucks may require an onsite fire inspection as well.

Additionally, the permit issued by Austin Public Health doesn't allow for vending on the right-of-way (parking space, sidewalk, and/or street). A [ROWMAN \(Right-of-Way Management Approval Network\) Permit](#) from the Austin Transportation Department is required for food truck vending in the right-of-way.

Food trucks temporarily operating in the Austin area and not in compliance with the above, must contact Austin Public Health's Environmental Health Services division at 512-978-0300.

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Outdoor Event Permit

An Outdoor Event permit is required for outdoor events on public and/or private property with more than 49 people and must be available upon request by an inspector.

An ACE application is required to be submitted at least 30 calendar days prior to the event or according to the SEO's deadline for the tier of the event (whichever is greater).

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Outdoor Exit Sign Requirements

Fire exits are necessary for any fenced events. The amount of fire exits and location will be determined by AFD.

Exit signage must meet the following requirements, unless otherwise specified by AFD:

- Lighted with backup power (LED battery-powered lights may be allowed upon review);
- Minimum height: Seven feet above ground
- Lettering shall be no smaller than 18 inches for exit signs (white sign with red lettering is preferred but red signage with white lettering is also allowed).

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Temporary Egress Lighting Installations

Required egress lighting and exits signs must not be on the same circuit as general use receptacles or decorative lighting.

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Recreational Fire Permit

Open burning (not a demonstration or performance for an audience) is a recreational fire, defined as, “an outdoor fire that burns materials other than rubbish and where the fuel being burned is not contained in an incinerator, outdoor fireplace, portable outdoor fireplace, barbeque grill or barbeque pit and has a total fuel area of 3 feet (914 mm) or less in diameter and 2 feet (610 mm) or less in height for pleasure, religious, ceremonial, cooking, warmth, and/or similar purposes.”

Those hosting events **with 50 or more people** must fill out an ACE application at least 30 days prior to the scheduled event or the deadline established by the SEO for the event within the appropriate tier.

Those hosting events **with less than 50 people** must fill out the standalone [Open Flame application](#) no less than 10 days prior to the event.

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Public Assembly (PA) Permit

An annual Public Assembly (PA) permit is required for public establishments who anticipate or operate at an occupancy rate of 50 or more people, and whose gross sales constitute 51% alcohol. Responsibility for acquiring and maintaining this permit will rest with the property owner or legal representative/agent.

Failure to renew your Annual Public Assembly Permit may result in a citation.

Inspections required for annual public assembly permits are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis and are based on completed application submission and payment dates.

Here is the Public Assembly (PA) permit [Application and Inspection Request form](#).

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Temporary Change of Use (TCOU) Permit

Under the International Fire Code definition, a “Public Assembly” is 50 or more people (e.g., use of a vacant building, warehouse, high-rise office building/garage, etc.). TCOU permits ensure all stipulations have been met to temporarily change the use of the structure so that the safety of occupants is ensured. Since said facility is not intended for Public Assemblies, it therefore lacks the required life-safety features required by the 2015 IFC/IBC.

The following may be required due to the size, complexity, and/or unique safety issues regarding the activities associated with a proposed event:

- Inspection services
- Fire watch
- Onsite stand-by inspectors and/or stand-by fire apparatus

No more than 12 TCOU permits shall be issued for any given address in a calendar year (January 1 – December 31).

Conditions of approval will be provided after the application review process is complete.

Those requesting Temporary Change of Use (TCOU) permits must fill out an ACE application at least thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled event or by the SEO’s deadline for the tier of the event (whichever is greater).

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Temporary Occupancy Load Adjustments

A Temporary Occupancy Load Adjustment modifies the occupant load at an assembly occupancy venue with a previously-issued a load card (i.e., an assembly occupancy adding a stage to their previously-approved floor plan which would result in a reduction in occupant load). This is NOT for permanent increases in occupant load; those must be approved by the City’s Development Services Department (DSD).

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Temporary Helistop Permit

Any temporary helistop erected for helicopter landing must meet fire code regulations and approved by the Austin Fire Marshal, who will issue the permit.

An [e-mail request](#) for a helistop permit must be made to the Austin Fire Department no later than 10 calendar days prior to the scheduled event.

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Tent Permit

When is an Austin Fire Department Tent Permit required?

Non Air Inflated:

- Tents anchored directly to the ground fall in the following categories:
 - Structures greater than 400 square feet with one or more sidewalls.
 - Structures greater than 400 square feet and within 20 feet of a building.
 - All structures greater than 700 square feet.

Air Inflated:

- Temporary Membrane Structures greater than 100 square feet.

AFD will have final determination on all fire related permits. Tents constructed on site must be reviewed and approved by the AFD for compliance with the current ordinances, safety, fire and building codes. All AFD permitted tents require a review and approval.

Those hosting an event **with 50 or more people** must fill out an ACE application but do not need a separate tent permit application. The application deadline will be 30 days or the SEO's deadline for the tier of the event (whichever is greater).

Those hosting an event **with less than 50 people** must fill out the standalone tent application for tents requiring a permit no less than 10 days prior to the event.

- [Standalone Tent Application](#)

Please note:

- Site plans should include detailed information on tent type, size, and location.
- Tent permit fees are nonrefundable.

General requirements

- Permitted tents or tent groups must be NFPA 701 compliant and have proof of compliance attached to the tent fabric from the manufacturer.
- All food vendors, including out of town mobile vendors/trailers, must have a current health permit.
- Cooking tents/temporary structure must be located a minimum of 20 ft. from any permanent structure.
- Cooking tents with sidewalls must be separated from any/all other tents by 20 ft.
- Vehicles must be parked a minimum of 20 ft. from each tent/temporary structure.
- Cooking vendors must be separated from non-cooking vendors by a 12 foot fire break.
- Enclosed tents require proper exiting and signage (battery back-up/tritium, 7 ft. high).
- "No Smoking" signs are required to be posted inside tent areas.
- Cooking and heating equipment shall not be located within 10 ft. of any exits or combustibles.

For a more detailed list, see [Tent Rules and Requirements](#).

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Inclement Weather Contingency Plans

Weather conditions can change quickly in Austin. An inclement weather plan that includes location of tents on the site plan should be included with the ACE application. Getting this pre-approved allows you to quickly add tents to your event in case of emergency.

- *Caution: Tents should **not** be occupied during electrical storms and/or high wind conditions.*

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Temporary Air Supported and Air Inflated Membrane Structures

- During high winds exceeding 50 miles per hour, the doors shall remain closed and be controlled when operated to open and close, avoiding excessive air loss.
- Doors shall be automatic closing to prevent pressure loss, swing in direction of exit travel, and shall open with 15 pounds or less of pressure.
- Construction of the fabric envelope and the method of anchoring shall comply with ASI 77.
- Structures used as a place of assembly shall have a minimum of 2 blowers with adequate capacity to maintain full inflation in case of failure of one blower.
- For places of assembly of more than 200 persons, auxiliary power (generator) shall be provided to power one blower continuously for four (4) hours.
- All temporary air supported and air inflated membrane structures may require an AFD Engineer review.

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Cooking Tents

Fire Extinguishers

- Each vendor/ tent must have a 2A10BC rated fire extinguisher.
- Any cooking operation involving combustible cooking media (frying vegetable or animal oils and fats) requires a Class K rated extinguisher, in addition to a 2A10BC rated fire extinguisher.
- All fire extinguishers must have a current annual inspection.
- Any solid fuel cooking operation (wood/charcoal) must have a minimum 2.5gl Class K extinguisher.

Propane

The number of appliances fueled by propane per vendor will be determined by the AFD inspector. Event setup, manufacturer recommendations, and public safety are a few of the things that AFD takes into consideration when making a determination of the number of propane fueled appliances allowed per vendor. A maximum 100 lbs. of propane in use per appliance, with a 200 lb. maximum of propane in use allowed per vendor.

- Propane bottles must be placed at the rear exterior of the tent for emergency access and at a minimum of five (5) feet away from any ignition source and cooking appliances.
 - Emergency access must not require tent entry.
 - Propane cylinders must be secured in an upright position.
- Spare propane bottles are not allowed on site unless approved.
 - Designated area for spare and empty propane tanks must be established and approved by fire department.
- Propane appliances must have LPG stamped on their hoses.

Grills & Pits

- No grilling with charcoal or wood is allowed under any tented structure.
- Outside BBQ pits with stacks must have a five (5) feet clear circumference from combustibles, a 15 feet clearance above the stacks, and a distance of ten (10) feet from any permanent structure or 20 feet from any tent.
- Homemade LPG appliances will be inspected individually and may not be authorized without an engineer's certificate.

Site Plans

Detailed site plans are required for all permit applications, except for Public Assembly. While site plans are not required to be professionally drawn, they must be legible, close to scale and provide sufficient detail to paint a picture of what your event will look like. Screen shots of a map with no details provided are not accepted.

Minimum site plan requirements

Property overview:

- Locations of fire lanes, streets, alleys, and fencing
 - Fencing must indicate location of exits and gates.
- Building foot print of all structures, location of building exits, exit pathways and sidewalks must be indicated.

Building overview:

- Floor plan of the building including the direction of door swings
- Furnishings used for the event
- Location of fire extinguishers
- Location of exits for egress pathway to guide the occupants outside

Provide a key that indicates:

- North (directional/compass)
- All areas used for the event
- Any special notes applicable to the event
- Street names

Provide details of the event layout:

- Location of tents or temporary structures including dimensions
- Food trucks, vendors, and merchandise areas
- Size and location of all stages
- Other specific details of the event

See the Site Plan Requirements section on [Planning Your Event](#) for more information and [here](#) for example plans.

Street/road access requirements

- The access road must comply with the appropriate minimum street width for dedicated city streets and fire access roadways
- Portions of such roadways (less than 25 feet wide) are not in locations where aerial apparatus deployment could be necessary to achieve control and/or extinguishment of a fire
- Turning radii are adequate for maneuvering fire department and other emergency service vehicles

Vendor Responsibilities

The Event Coordinator/Organizer must ensure all vendors comply with the following requirements:

- Approved load-in and load-out procedures are adhered to before, during, and after the permitted special event.
- Fire and safety requirements are adhered to at all times while participating in the event.
- All required valid permits are current and posted in a visible location.
- Are prepared for fire and/or health inspections at any time during the event, and violations found must be corrected immediately.

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Glossary

- **After Hours Inspection:** Inspection performed after 1600 (4:00pm) on weekdays, weekends, and holidays. This fee may also be incurred if the event is not established and ready for final inspection due to load in, time of event, date of event or various other circumstances.
- **Apparatus Standby:** As part of the permit requirements, some events due to size, complexity and/or unique safety issues regarding the activities associated with the proposed event may be required to have a stand-by fire apparatus(s) at the event. (Examples include: large fenced in festivals where access is limited and response times to potential incident(s) are drastically reduced, discharging fireworks and events that are held in areas that pose a safety risk to wild land fires and/or approved during a burn ban.
- **Certificate of Occupancy (CO):** Certificate issued to a building or structure stating the use and occupancy classification of the structure. The building official issues the CO after the building official finds no violations of the provisions of the building code or other applicable codes and ordinances. No building or structure shall be used or occupied, and no change in the existing occupancy classification of a building or structure or portion thereof shall be made until the building official has issued a CO. Issuance of a CO shall not be construed as an approval of a violation of the provisions of the building code or of other ordinances of the City of Austin.
- **Fire Watch:** Standby Inspector(s), requirement determinations are made on a case by case basis. Usually required in buildings/structures that do not have an alarm system and/or sprinkler system. Fire watch fees must be paid in full at least five (5) business days prior to an event. Fire watch is scheduled on a first come, first serve basis and is pending availability of the inspectors designated from the Fire Marshal's Office. Cancellation of a scheduled fire watch must be made 48 hours prior to the scheduled event for a refund to be considered.
- **Public Assembly (PA):** The use of a building or structure, or a portion thereof, for the gathering together of persons for the purposes such as civic, social or religious functions, recreation or entertainment, food or drink consumption or awaiting transportation. A room or space used for assembly purposes by less than 50 persons and accessory to occupancy shall be included as a part of that occupancy. See 2015 International Fire Code and local amendments for more information.

- **Recreational Fire:** An outdoor fire burning materials other than rubbish where the fuel being burned is not contained in an incinerator, outdoor fireplace, portable outdoor fireplace, barbeque grill or barbeque pit and has a total fuel area of 3 feet (914 mm) or less in diameter and 2 feet (610 mm) or less in height for pleasure, religious, ceremonial, cooking, warmth or similar purposes.

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