

## Austin Fire Department - Office of Special Events

### Planning Your Event

- [AFD Special Events Fee Schedule](#)
- [Temporary Change of Use \(TCOU\) Permit](#)
- [Temporary Occupancy Load Adjustments](#)
- [Tent Permit](#)
- [Food Truck Permit & Inspection](#)
- [Vendor Responsibilities](#)
- [Fireworks](#)
- [Pyrotechnics/Flame Effect/Open Flame Performance Permit](#)
- [Burn Permit](#)
- [Outdoor Event Permit](#)
- [Exhibit & Trade Show Permit](#)
- [Carnival/Circus Operational Permit](#)
- [Temporary Helistop Permit](#)
- [Site Plan](#)
- [Fire Lane](#)
- [Outdoor Exit Sign Requirements](#)
- [Temporary Egress Lighting Installations](#)
- [Glossary](#)

## AFD Special Events Fee Schedule

View the AFD Special Event fees:

<http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Fire/Prevention/feeschedule.pdf>

## AFD Special Event 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). Significant enough changes may require a new ACE application

[\(Back to top\)](#)

## Temporary Change of Use (TCOU) Permit

A Temporary Change of Use Permit is required for structures or portions of structures used as a public assembly not currently in possession of the correct certificate of occupancy for a Public Assembly. Under the International Fire Code definition, a "Public Assembly" consists of 50 or more people (i.e., use of a vacant building, warehouse, or high rise office building/garage.) The purpose of this is to ensure the safety of occupants since the facility is not intended for Public Assemblies and 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 the proposed event:

- Inspection services

- Fire watch
- Onsite stand-by inspectors and stand-by fire apparatus

Conditions of approval will be provided after the application review process has been completed.

[\(Back to top\)](#)

## Temporary Occupancy Load Adjustments

A Temporary Occupancy Load Adjustment is used to modify the occupant load at an assembly occupancy venue that has already been issued a load card. (i.e., an assembly occupancy adding a stage to their approved floor plan which would result in a reduction in occupant load.) This is not intended to be used for increases in occupant load (increases are approved by DSD).

[\(Back to top\)](#)

## Tent Permit

### When is an Austin Fire Department Tent Permit required?

Non Air Inflated:

- Tents anchored directly to the ground falls 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.

### Tent requirements:

- Events with 50 or more people will need to fill out an ACE application and will not need a separate tent permit application. Application deadline will be the greater of 30 calendar days or the deadline established by the SEO for that tier event.
- Events with less than 50 people will need to fill out a tent application for tents requiring a permit. Application deadline is ten (10) calendar days.
- Site plans should include detailed information on tent type, size, and location.
- Tent permits are nonrefundable

## 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. Having your plan pre-approved will allow you to quickly add tents to your event in case of emergency.
  - *Caution: Tents should not be occupied during electrical storms and high wind conditions.*

## 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 two (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.

## Cooking Tents

### Propane

- Propane cylinders and regulators must be placed securely at the rear of the tent for emergency access and at a minimum of five (5) feet away from any ignition source and cooking appliances.
- Propane appliances must have the manufacturer's Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) stamped or noted on their hoses.
- Spare propane bottles are not allowed in the tent area.
  - Spare propane cylinders whether empty or full must not be stored in the vendor area. The event promoter must provide a propane storage area that is 50 feet from the main public area, accessible to AFD, fenced, labeled with NFPA 704 Diamonds, and no smoking signs. If storage area is within ten (10) feet of moving vehicles, vehicle impact protection must be provided.
- Fryers must be placed at the rear of the tent, on a stable platform and far away from the public as possible.
- Pressure relief valves are required to face away from tent, combustibles, or other ignition sources.
- Tent walls, combustibles, and storage items must be three (3) feet from any open flame cooking appliance.

### Grills & Pits

- Grilling with charcoal or wood is not allowed under or within 20 feet of any tented structure.
- Solid fuel appliances must be covered while in use.
- Outside BBQ pits with stacks must have a five (5) feet clear circumference from combustibles, and a 15 feet clearance above the stack.
- Homemade LPG appliances will be inspected individually and may not be authorized without an engineer's certificate.

[\(Back to top\)](#)

## 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. They may not expand their 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. Please ensure the food trucks at your event have the proper permits with them onsite.

It is important to be familiar with the [AFD Mobile Food Vending Checklist](#). All mobile vendors/trailers at special events are subject to a fire inspection.

Food trucks in a special event may require an onsite fire inspection. Additionally, the permit issued by the Austin Public Health Department doesn't allow for vending on the right-of-way (parking space, sidewalk, or street). **A Special Event Closure 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 the Austin Public Health Environmental Health Services Division at 512-978-0300.**

[\(Back to top\)](#)

## Vendor Responsibilities

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

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

[\(Back to top\)](#)

## Fireworks

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

**Requests for aerial fireworks, pyrotechnics, and special effects must be submitted at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to scheduled event.** Please email

[AFDSpecialEvents@austintexas.gov](mailto:AFDSpecialEvents@austintexas.gov) for more information.

[\(Back to top\)](#)

## Pyrotechnics/Flame Effect/Open Flame Performance Permit

A flame effect is the combustion of flammable solids, liquids or gases to produce thermal, physical, visual 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.

**Requests for flame effect, open flame performances, etc., must be submitted at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to scheduled event.** Please email [AFDSpecialEvents@austintexas.gov](mailto:AFDSpecialEvents@austintexas.gov) for more information.

[\(Back to top\)](#)

## Burn Permit

**All required information must be submitted to the Austin Fire Department for open burning at least ten (10) calendar days prior to scheduled event.**

If the display is part of an ACE application, all required information must be submitted at the time of the ACE application submittal. If the display is not part of an ACE application, the requestor must submit to: <https://cityofaustin.seamlessdocs.com/f/fireworkspermit>.

Open burning is not a demonstration or performance for an audience.

- *Exception: see Recreational Fire in [glossary](#) for definition.*

[\(Back to top\)](#)

## Outdoor Event Permit

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

[\(Back to top\)](#)

## 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 indicated would be *any configuration that deviates from the normal use of the space to include sectioning to reduce the size of the original space or a configuration which obstructs the exits or egress pathways within the space (i.e., fence, structures, pipe and drape or other barriers)*.

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

**To obtain the permit, a complete online application and floor plan submission should be submitted at least twenty-one (21) calendar days prior to your event.**

[\(Back to top\)](#)

## Carnival/Circus Operational Permit

An operational permit is required to operate a circus or carnival that will have 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).**

[\(Back to top\)](#)

## Temporary Helistop Permit

Any temporary helistop erected for helicopter landing is required to meet fire code regulations and approved by the Austin Fire Marshal with issuance of permit.

**The request for a helistop permit application must be made to the Austin Fire Department no later than ten (10) calendar days prior to scheduled event. The completed application must be returned within one (1) business day of receipt via email.** Request an application via email to [AFDSpecialEvents@austintexas.gov](mailto:AFDSpecialEvents@austintexas.gov).

[\(Back to top\)](#)

## Site Plan

Detailed site plans are required for application submission. 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 demonstrated in the site plan.

#### **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:**

- The direction of north
- 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.

[\(Back to top\)](#)

## Fire Lane

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 so long as:

- the access road complies with the appropriate minimum street width for dedicated City streets, and such fire access roadways,
- or portions of such road ways, which are 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,
- and turning radii are adequate for maneuvering fire department and other emergency services vehicles.

The Fire Chief shall have 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 any obstructions positioned over roadways including but not limited to event starting lines, overhead banners, or event entry structural support systems.

[\(Back to top\)](#)

## 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:

- Should be lighted and have backup power
  - LED battery powered lights may be allowed upon review
- Minimum height is 7-feet above ground
- Lettering shall be no smaller than 18 inches for exit signs
  - White sign with red lettering is preferred
  - Alternate sign allowed: Red sign with White lettering

[\(Back to top\)](#)

## Temporary Egress Lighting Installations

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

[\(Back to top\)](#)

## 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.

[\(Back to top\)](#)