



# Seattle Fire Department

Fire Marshal's Office - Special Events Section

220 3rd Avenue South  
Seattle, WA 98104-2608

Phone: 206-386-1450

## Special Events – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

**Q: When do I need to get a Temporary Place of Assembly permit?**

A: When you are operating a carnival, fair or festival. When the venue in which your event takes place does not already have a valid permit for Place of Assembly issued by the Seattle Fire Department. When the venue in which your event takes place has a valid Place of Assembly permit but there is a temporary change of use or type, a temporary change in type of activity, a temporary increase in occupancy load, a temporary change in routes of exit from the venue, or a temporary introduction of an additional hazard, (e.g. candles, display of vehicles, performances that include pyrotechnics or fire.)

**Q: How do I get a permit application?**

A: You may obtain a permit application in person by coming down to 220 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South (Seattle Fire Department's Fire Prevention Building) or; you may call the Fire Marshal's Office at (206) 386-1450 and request the Permit Section mail or fax an application to you. The Fire Marshal's Office is open, Monday -Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (**Also see:** [Permit Application Fees](#))

**Note: Inspectors will not collect permit fees or permit applications in the field.**

**Q: When do I need a tent permit?**

A: Tents over 200 square feet in area (e.g. greater than 10' x 20') and canopies over 400 square feet in area (e.g. greater than 20' x 20') require Fire Department permits. A tent is defined as a membrane structure with two or more sidewalls. If it has only one sidewall or no sidewalls, it is considered a canopy. (Also see: [Tent & Canopy Permit Procedures](#))

**Q: What kind of heater can I use in my tent?**

A: "Mushroom type" propane heaters (e.g. upright heaters with a self-contained propane fuel source) and any other heaters designed so that the propane source is located inside the tent or canopy are prohibited. Heaters that operate with the propane fuel source located outside of the tent or canopy and the heated air is pumped into the structure (e.g. salamander heaters) are allowed but require a Fire Department permit.

Electric heaters may be operated inside a tent and do not require a Fire Department permit.

**Q: I need more propane for my cooking operation than my permit allows. What can I do?**

A: Call the Fire Marshal's Office at (206) 386-1450 and request to speak to a representative of the Special Event Section. There are several criteria in the Fire Code, which if you are able to meet them, may allow you to increase the quantities of propane you are permitted to use for your cooking operation.

**Q: My setup isn't exactly like the floor plans I sent in along with my permit application. Is that a problem?**

A: Your permit is contingent upon meeting the conditions attached to it. In this case the floor plans attached to the permit constitute a portion of the permit conditions. Any variation from them invalidates the permit. You may however call the Fire Marshal's Office at (206) 386-1450 and ask to speak to a representative of the Special Events Section with regard to changes you would like to make to your floor plans. These changes will be considered by the Special Events Section prior to the event you are planning, right up until the day of the event. These changes may or may not be approved.

**Q: I didn't know that needed to have a permit until today and my event is scheduled for tonight. Can I still have my event?**

A: An inspector from the Special Events Section of the Fire Marshal's Office is required to approve your event. **If this is the first time you have applied for a permit AND an inspector is available**, we will try to accommodate you as best we can. This is not a guarantee that your event will be approved. If an inspector from the Special Events Section is available to look at the plans and/or the site for the event, all pertinent Fire Code requirements must still be met before the permit can be approved.

**Important:** Permit applications received less than 10 business days prior to the event for which they are being used, will be assessed an additional late permit surcharge of 50% of the original permit fee. Applications received 3 business days or less prior to the event may not be processed and the permit not issued.

**Q: I'm bringing my own decorative material (e.g., drapes, vertical hangings, etc.) to a show. When do they need to be treated and how do I do this?**

A: All decorative materials within 18 inches of an ignition source (i.e., candles, butane burners, etc.) or potential ignition source (i.e., electrical cords, outlets, etc.) are required by the Fire Code to be flame retardant.

Verification of the product/item in question as being flame retardant can only be accomplished via a valid Flame Certificate. The Flame Certificate must be available on-site. It shall indicate the product/item in question meets NFPA 701 or California State Fire Marshal requirements for flame retardancy.

If a product/item is inherently flame retardant, a Flame Certificate should be available from the manufacturer upon request that indicates it meets NFPA 701 or California State Fire Marshal requirements for flame retardancy.

When a product is not flame retardant or there is no Flame Certificate available for the product, it must be treated by a third party to render it flame retardant. The treating party should then provide a Flame Certificate indicating the product/item meets NFPA 701 or California State Fire Marshal requirements for flame retardancy.

**Q: I want to display a vehicle at my event. Are there any restrictions?**

A: Yes, a liquid or gas-fueled vehicle or equipment can be displayed in a Place of Assembly under the following conditions:

- Maximum fuel: 1/4 of a tank or 5 gallons whichever is less.
- All gas covers shall be taped or have a locking type gas cap.
- Battery cables shall be disconnected and taped.
- Vehicles with no fuel gauge or with broken fuel gauge shall not be allowed on the event floor

and shall not be displayed, unless a representative of the Fire Marshal's Office gives prior approval.

For more information, please call the Seattle Fire Marshal's Office at (206) 386-1450 Monday -Friday, 8:00am - 5:00pm, and ask to speak to a representative of the Special Events Section.