

Event Services

Fire Safety Guidelines

Role of the Seattle Fire Department

A Seattle Fire Department (SFD) Public Assembly Permit is required for exhibits, registration areas, any proposed obstruction or alteration of existing fire exits. Certain other activities in Exhibit Halls, Session Rooms, Lobbies, or Common Areas of Washington State Convention Center (WSCC) may also require a permit from SFD.

You must have a floor plan approved by WSCC and SFD prior to selling or assigning booth space. It is important to start the approval process early, typically at least 12 months in advance of your event. All fire permit documents and information should be sent to your WSCC Event Manager (EM) for review before sending to the SFD office.

The information provided below is a general guideline of the policies and regulations pertaining to the usage of WSCC as a temporary public assembly. These regulations are described in Local and National Fire Code as applied by the Seattle Fire Department as well as in the Seattle Building Code and WSCC Policy. Facility clients, exhibit managers, show decorators, and/or general service contractors are responsible for ensuring compliance with these regulations. Please contact your EM if you have questions regarding this information or the overall process.

Fire Permit Approval Process

1. Send proposed floor plans to EM for facility review prior to booth sales or assignment.
2. Failure to submit a floor plan in a timely manner may result in EM submitting a standard Max Booth for SFD permit at the expense of the contracted event client.
3. After EM review and approval, floorplans may be submitted for SFD Permit Application.
4. SFD will not review or approve a floorplan without a paid permit application and approval from WSCC. Application materials should include:
 - Completed application form*.
 - Required fee – payable to the City of Seattle**.
 - Floor plans drawn to scale in 8.5"x11" .pdf format.
 - Show name and contracted dates
 - Service contractor company and contact
5. The fire permit will be issued by SFD once all plans have been approved by both SFD and WSCC.
6. Any changes (onsite or in advance) to the floorplan must be sent to your EM and approved by SFD and WSCC.
7. Failure to report changes or modifications is a violation of your Fire Permit Conditions and may result in a citation.
8. SFD may inspect show prior to the show opening and at random during the event.
9. Failure to comply with your specific Fire Permit Conditions may result in SFD citation or cause doors to be held until compliance is achieved.

* Link for SFD Temporary Assembly Occupancy Application: <http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/Fire/Business/2503-2505.pdf>

** Important: Permit applications received less than 30 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.

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Minimum Floor Plan Requirements

General Requirements

Any deviations from the minimum requirements described in this section are subject to the approval of your EM and SFD. Circumstances that are not addressed herein will be subject to review by WSCC and SFD.

The location of the following items must be shown on all floorplans submitted for approval:

- All fire exits and primary entrances
- All aisle locations and dimensions
- All installed equipment (counters, stages, service desks, entry units, fill-in desks, etc.)
- Food service, catering and/or concession areas (these items must be approved by your EM in advance.)
- Storage, boneyards, draped off or masked areas. Enclosed or hardwall booths must show necessary exits.
- Temporary illuminated exit signs with appropriate directional arrows as needed.
- Additional signage to indicate obscured fire extinguishers or hose cabinets.

Exhibit Areas

Your EM can provide maximum booth configurations that comply with the requirements as described below.

- Booth layout in a north/south configuration, unless otherwise approved.
- Booths numbered in “addressable” configuration.
- Continuous and unobstructed perimeter and cross aisles as described below
 - (1) 10 foot wide continuous perimeter aisle **AND**
 - (1) 12 foot wide east/west cross aisle **OR**
 - (2) 10 foot wide east/west cross aisles separated by at least 40 feet
- Additionally, the following unobstructed and straight 10 foot wide north/south aisles are required:
 - 4A or 4B (2) aisles
 - 4AB or 4BC (4) aisles
 - 4ABC (6) aisles
 - 4C (1) aisle
 - 4D (See Usable Space requirements)
 - 4E (3) aisles
 - 4F (2) aisles
 - 4EF (5) aisles
 - A limited number of 9 foot north/south aisles may be approved by SFD, if drawn on the floorplan.
- Exit(s) that are obscured by drape, screens or other equipment:
 - Must be approved by SFD.
 - Must include a baffle or break in the drape to access obstructed exits.
 - Must have installed an illuminated exit sign(s) with appropriate directional arrow.
 - Must maintain a clear path behind the drape, screen or other obstruction to the affected exit(s).
- “WSCC Use” Food & Beverage areas indicated in standard booth configuration diagrams cannot be used without the written permission of your EM and Catering Sales Manager.
- Roll-up gates and airwalls to the loading dock or service corridors must be kept clear and closed during event hours.
- Large general sessions, which alter two (2) or more exits must be submitted with the Fire Permit Application.
- Individual exhibits 300 square feet or more may be required to submit a booth plan.

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Meeting Rooms, Ballrooms and Other Temporary Enclosed Spaces

All meeting rooms are subject to maximum occupancy load as dictated by code.

- All rooms occupied by more than 49 persons require at least two or more exits, depending on capacity.
- Chairs set theater style must be connected or “ganged” together.
- Consult your EM for aisle requirements for exhibits or large general sessions in ballrooms.
- Fire exits that are obscured by drape, screens or other equipment:
 - Must be approved by WSCC and SFD. Diagrams must be included with the Fire Permit Application.
 - Must include a baffle or break in the drape. Or, position screens to allow access to fire exit(s).
 - Must have an illuminated exit sign(s) installed with appropriate directional arrow indicating fire exit location.
 - Must have clear path to fire exit(s) marked with white gaffers tape or rope lights.

Lobbies and other Common Areas

- Registration layout and lobby equipment diagrams are required before a fire permit can be issued.
- Configuration and equipment placement must comply with WSCC Usable Space guidelines.
- Entry unit(s) size and location must be approved by your EM and SFD before installation.
 - Must be shown on submitted floor plans and Fire Permit Application.
 - Support columns cannot obstruct entry doors or escalator paths.
 - Center support cannot exceed ½ meter square.
- Items such as tables, meter boards, easels, poster boards, etc. placed in meeting room corridors cannot obstruct egress through the corridors.
- Catering service locations must be approved by EM and indicated on submitted floor plans.
- Displays, attractions or equipment are prohibited at escalator landings that would restrict egress.

Other Items Requiring Fire Department Review or Permit

Each of the items as described below pertains to show management, contractors, AV providers as well as individual exhibitors. It is the responsibility of facility clients and show contractors to communicate these requirements to exhibitors by way of the Exhibitor Services Manual or other means.

Batteries

Use of portable batteries for powered equipment and vehicles is not allowed.

- Temporary power provided by Edlen must be ordered in advance for all display equipment.
- All powered equipment and displays must be UL certified.
- See also: Vehicles

Combustible Storage

Packing material, empty boxes, cardboard, or other combustible storage are prohibited throughout exhibit halls.

- No combustible storage is allowed. No empty or flat cardboard boxes may be stored:
 - Inside booth spaces
 - Behind the drape of an individual booth
 - In unsold or dead areas of the show floor.
- Full boxes of brochures and other literature for distribution may be stored in a booth as follows:
 - Any literature storage must be stored at least 18 inches away from ignition sources, such as electrical outlets.
 - Under one eight foot table fronting the booth space.
 - Inside a hard wall storage closet within a booth.

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Compressed Gas

All usage of compressed gas in WSCC must be coordinated with your EM. This includes usage or storage of fuel for gas powered equipment (e.g. forklifts).

- Helium or nitrogen tanks are allowed on the event floor under the following conditions:
 - Prior approval by SFD.
 - Tanks must be properly labeled for contents.
 - Firmly secured in the upright position and valves protected against damage.
- Nitrous oxide and oxygen tanks
 - Less than 250 cubic feet are allowed under the conditions as described above.
 - Over 250 cubic feet are not allowed in WSCC.
- LPG (Liquefied Propane Gas) and CNG (Compressed Natural Gas) are prohibited in WSCC during event activity.
- Butane tanks are limited to one ten ounce canister. (see also Cooking)
- Hall 4F has a permanent natural gas connection managed by Edlen Electrical. Advance approval and fees required.
- Usage of any other type or amount of compressed gas will be evaluated case-by-case by SFD.

Cooking

Cooking in WSCC must be approved in advance by your EM and Catering Sales Manager.

- Butane canisters may be used in conjunction with tabletop burners (e.g. campstove cylinder).
 - Each exhibit booth is limited to one one ten ounce Butane canister in use, plus one spare.
 - Additional canisters must be secured outside the building in an area that is approved by WSCC.
- Deep fat fryers may be used under the following conditions:
 - Maximum capacity of one gallon.
 - Readily available UL “Class K” fire extinguisher.
 - Metal cover capable of covering the deep fat fryer.

Covered Booths

A covered booth is one that has any material, object, or structure placed over or upon the exhibit, such as a roof, canopy, tent, Moss® fabric, etc. Detailed requirements for review and approval of a covered booth will be provided by your EM.

- Approval process should begin at least three months in advance.
- Submit scale drawings to EM.
- Drawings must show exact square footage calculation of covered area.
- 101 – 300 square feet must be equipped with:
 - One “2A 10BC” rated fire extinguisher.
 - Smoke detector placed at the highest point.
 - Means of turning off electrical power to the booth during non-show hours.
- 301 square feet or more must be equipped with:
 - All requirements as listed above.
 - Temporary automatic fire suppression sprinkler system must be installed for covered area, at Exhibitor’s expense.

Entry Units

Entry unit(s) size and location must be approved by your EM and SFD before installation.

- Must be shown on submitted floor plans.
- Support columns cannot obstruct entry doors or escalator paths.
- Center support cannot exceed ½ meter square.

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Fire Watch/Guard

Fire watch/guard is not required at WSCC; our life safety system and Security Control officers monitor the facility on a 24/7 basis. SFD does not provide fire guard in lieu of requirements of a covered or multi-level booth or other fire regulated condition.

Flame Proofing

All decorations, carpeting, drapes, signs, banners, plastic displays, or other combustible items must be inherently flame-resistant or treated with an acceptable flame-proofing substance. Verification of flame proofing in accordance with NFPA 701 or CPAI 84 must be displayed for the duration of the show for SFD inspection.

- Acceptable verification of flame resistance include:
 - A tag or label affixed to the item by the manufacturer indicating it meets standards.
 - Valid Certificate of Flame Resistance from a third party or manufacturer of the item.
- Evidence of self-treatment of items by aerosol spray or other means is not acceptable.
- Items which are not accompanied by a verification of flame proofing must be removed prior to the show opening.
- Oilcloth, tarpaper, sisal paper, straw or hay, nylon, Orlon and certain synthetic materials which cannot be made flame resistant are prohibited.
- Wood panels or crates more than ¼ inch thickness are considered inherently flame resistant without treatment.

Multi-Level Booths

A multi-level booth is one with a second level or tier of any size constructed above the exhibit or portion of the exhibit, which is accessed by stairs and can be occupied by persons.

- Approval process should begin at least four months in advance.
- Submit scale drawings to EM in 8.5"x 11" .pdf format.
- Drawings must show exact square footage calculation of upper deck and any other covered areas.
- All requirements for Covered Booths will apply.
- Temporary Structure Permit from the Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections may be required.
- Temporary automatic fire suppression sprinkler system must be installed for covered portion(s) and connected to WSCC life safety system by our approved supplier, at the expense of the exhibitor.
- An exhibit that fails to comply with these regulations will not be allowed to install for the event.

Open Flame

An Open Flame Permit may be required for any open flame or candle during your event. You must inform your EM if there is to be any open flame during your show.

- Sterno does not require a permit. Candles provided by Aramark are pre-approved and do not need a permit.
- Candelabras, taper candles, or other tall exposed flames will not be allowed.
- Other candles used as décor for banquets must be reviewed by your EM before the event.
- Exhibitors using candles in their booth must submit an Open Flame permit application to SFD.

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Special Effects

- Pyrotechnics, flame performances, or fireworks are not allowed in WSCC.
- Lasers or other light shows may be used without a permit with advance approval by WSCC.
- Fog or haze machines may be used for stage productions without permit under the following conditions:
 - EM must be notified at least 14 days in advance.
 - Must use water-based fluid.
 - Specific schedule of fog or haze usage must be coordinated with EM.
 - Fog or haze machines are not allowed in individual exhibit booths without pre-approval.

Structures Over 48 Inches

Any structure over 48 inches in height that will be occupied by one or more person(s) is considered a site-built structure. The process for approval of site-built structures should be started with your EM at least six months in advance of your event.

A Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections Temporary Structure Permit may be required for the following.

- Multi-level booths or other structures, to be occupied by attendees or personnel.
- Stages, platforms or risers exceeding 48 inches.
- Bleachers or tiered seating.
- Scaffold for projectors or lighting is exempted, unless occupied by an operator.

Vehicles

- Displayed vehicles must be indicated on floor plans for Fire Marshal approval.
- Schedule for delivery and removal must be submitted to your EM.
- Fuel in tanks is limited to a maximum of ¼ tank or five gallons, whichever is less.
- Diesel fuel tanks are limited to a maximum of ¼ tank.
- Vehicles with no or non-functioning fuel gauges will not be allowed in public assembly areas without prior approval by the Fire Marshal.
- Battery cables must be disconnected, with the cable ends taped over to prevent sparking.
- Display vehicles with equipment to be operated must be connected to facility shore power provided by Edlen Electrical.
- Fuel tank fill caps must be either lockable or taped shut.
- Interior latch release, if so equipped, must be disabled.
- Visqueen must protect facility flooring.
- Vehicles may not be moved during event hours.
- Electric vehicles are exempted from these requirements. Hybrids with liquid fuel must comply as above.