



**CHARLOTTE FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE
500 DALTON AVE
CHARLOTTE, NC 28206**



Guidelines for Carnivals, Fairs and Festivals

The purpose of these requirements is to establish a set of guidelines that operators/organizers of carnivals, fairs and festivals shall follow in order to provide a reasonable level of safety for the public. Any proposed alternative measures to the requirements below shall provide an equal level of safety and shall require prior approval of the fire official.

Permits:

- The operator/organizer of any carnival, fair, festival, or other type of temporary amusement site shall obtain an operational permit from the Charlotte Fire Department. This permit is separate and distinct from any other permit required by other City agencies.
- The applicant shall notify the Charlotte Fire Department, Fire Prevention Bureau no less than 30 days prior to the commencement of the event for the request of a permit application.
- Submittal of the permit application shall be accompanied by a set of scaled drawings and public safety plan that includes all the following:
 - Location of perimeter fencing
 - Calculated occupant load
 - Emergency exit locations
 - Emergency vehicle ingress and egress.
 - Fire protection.
 - Emergency egress or escape routes.
 - Emergency medical services.
 - Public assembly areas.
 - The directing of both attendees and vehicles, including the parking of vehicles.
 - Vendor and food concession distribution.
 - The need for the presence of law enforcement.
 - The need for fire and emergency medical services personnel.
 - Locations of all tents, stages, vendors and amusements



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- List of all trained crowd managers
 - One crowd manager is required for every 250 persons in attendance
 - An additional Tent and Canopy Permit will be required for enclosed tents that exceed 800 square feet, canopies that exceed 1800 square feet or stage canopies that exceed 400 square feet (see “Temporary Stage Canopies” below). Tents shall comply with the regulations of Chapter 31 of the NC Fire Code.
 - An additional permit and approval are required for pyrotechnic displays.

Guidelines

- Fencing installed for crowd control shall have exits with a minimum width of 12 feet. The number and location of exits shall be determined by the fire official, but in no case shall there be less than two remote exits.
 - If more than 6000 persons are served by the means of egress, there shall not be less than three exits.
 - If more than 9000 persons are served by the means of egress, there shall not be less than four exits.
- Each exit shall be posted with “EXIT” signs large enough to be clearly visible and legible from anywhere in the event area. Illumination of signs shall be required at night.
- The placement of any ride, vendor or structure shall not obstruct any exit or access thereto.
- The carnival area shall be accessible from all sides for fire, medical and rescue operations by way of an access road no less than 20 feet in width.
- The location and placement of the carnival and equipment, or the parking of vehicles shall not obstruct access to any fire hydrant(s), fire sprinkler connections, or any building already located on the property.



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- All tents used for cooking purposes shall be:
 - Flame retardant, separated from assembly tents by 20 ft., provided with a Class K fire extinguisher with a current inspection tag, properly secured at each corner as recommended by the tent manufacturer.
 - LP gas cylinders must be secured to prevent from falling over and located at least 10 (500 gallons or less) or 20 feet (>500 gallons) from the tent.
 - Generators and other internal combustion power sources shall be separated from tents or canopies by a minimum of 20 feet, 10 feet from combustible materials, and shall be isolated from the public by fencing (bike racks) or other approved means installed not less than three feet away from the internal combustion power source.
 - Approved portable fire extinguishers with current inspection tags shall be provided and placed in locations approved by the fire code official.
 - Smoking shall be permitted only in designated areas. Other areas shall have approved “No Smoking” signs posted in conspicuous locations.
 - Combustible Vegetation that could create a fire hazard shall be removed from the outdoor assembly event site.
 - Combustible refuse shall be kept in noncombustible containers with tight-fitting or self-closing lids. Combustible refuse shall be removed from the event site at regular intervals to prevent an unsafe accumulation within the event site.
 - Gated festivals will be required to hire two Fire Inspectors to be on site during the event when the number of expected attendees exceeds 1,000 persons to maintain access to exits and assist with an evacuation if necessary.
 - Outside festivals will be required to provide EMTs during the event when the number of expected attendees exceeds 1,000 persons.



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Temporary Stage Canopies

Temporary stage canopies are temporary ground supported membrane-covered frame structures used to cover stage areas and support equipment in the production of outdoor entertainment events.

- Temporary stage canopies must comply with the requirements of Section 3105 of the NC Fire Code and ANSI E1.21.
- The operator/organizer of any carnival, fair, festival, or other type of temporary amusement site utilizing a temporary stage canopy shall obtain a permit from the fire code official and the Mecklenburg County Building Department. Below are useful links to assist with obtaining a permit through the Mecklenburg County Building Department:
 - Visitors Guide:
<https://www.mecknc.gov/LUESA/CodeEnforcement/Documents/Visitor%20Guide%20to%20Special%20Events.pdf>
 - Mecklenburg County Code Enforcement Special Events Application:
<https://www.mecknc.gov/LUESA/CodeEnforcement/Documents/Special%20Events%20Application%20-%20ALL%20EVENTS%20-%20FINAL.pdf>
 - Mecklenburg County Code Enforcement Special Events web page:
<https://www.mecknc.gov/LUESA/CodeEnforcement/Inspections/Pages/SpecialEvents.aspx>
- Submittal of the permit application shall be accompanied by the following documents:
 - Construction documents including:
 1. A summary sheet showing the building code used, design criteria, loads and support reactions
 2. Detailed construction and installation documents
 3. Design Calculations
 4. Operating limits of the structure explicitly outlined by the registered design professional including environmental conditions and physical forces



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5. Effects of additive elements such as video walls, supported scenery, audio equipment, vertical and horizontal coverings
 6. Means for adequate stability including specific requirements for guying and cross-bracing, ground anchors or ballast for different ground conditions
 - The designation of a responsible party on site with sufficient knowledge of the construction documents, manufacturer's recommendations and operations plan to make judgments regarding the structure's safety.
 - An operations plan, reflecting manufacturer's operational guidelines, procedures for environmental monitoring and actions to be taken under specified conditions consistent with the construction documents.
- Before the use of a temporary stage canopy can be granted, the owner of the canopy shall employ a qualified, independent approved agency or individual to inspect the installation and provide an inspection report to the fire code official indicating it was inspected and was or was not installed in accordance with the approved construction documents.
 - Discrepancies shall be brought to the immediate attention of the installer for correction. Where any discrepancy is not corrected, it shall be brought to the attention of the fire code official and the designated responsible party.