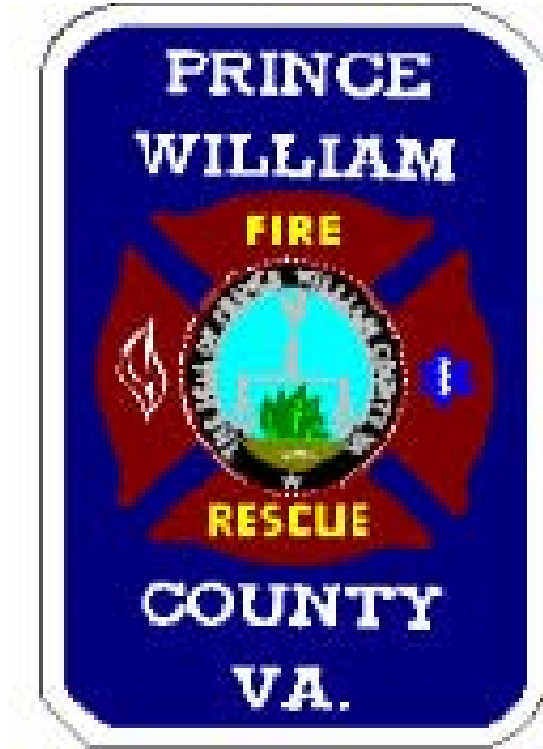


# **FIRE SAFETY GUIDELINES**

## **Assembly Events**



## **PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE**

5 County Complex Ct  
Prince William, Virginia 22192  
TELEPHONE: 703-792-6360

The following fire safety guidelines have been compiled to assist organizers in planning and safely implementing an assembly event, while meeting the intent of the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code. Our common goal and all of your efforts should result in a **SAFE, FUN and SUCCESSFUL** assembly event.

## **OPERATIONAL PERMITS**

Required operational permits shall be in accordance with the Statewide Fire Prevention Code. Permits are required for the operation of a public assembly and for erecting tents in excess of 900 square feet or canopies in excess of 700 square feet.

Tents and canopies exceeding the square footage outlined above shall not be erected, operated or maintained for any purpose without first obtaining a permit and approval from the Fire Marshal. Permits for tents and canopies may be obtained by making application with the Office of the Fire Marshal.

Requests for permits shall be made in writing by the person in charge of the event (Committee Chairperson). This can be done by completing and submitting an Operational Permit application for an assembly event. Upon approval, the required operational permit(s) will be issued at the time of the facility and site inspection on the day of the event.

The approval process is outlined here for your convenience:

The submittal of a written emergency plan and a facility layout (floor plan) is required. One copy of this written plan and facility layout shall be submitted **at least 30 days prior** to the event for approval by the event inspector. Each submittal shall be accompanied by a self-addressed, postage-paid return envelope.

### **THE WRITTEN EMERGENCY PLAN MUST INCLUDE:**

- Complete contact information for the event committee chairperson and all alternate contact(s) in case that person can not be reached.
- The date(s) & time(s) of the event(s), name of the school having or sponsoring the event, the name and address of the event facility and the approximate completion time for set-up on the day of the event.
- The approximate number of attendees and parents/facility staff.
- Evacuation and accountability procedures for all attendees in the event of an emergency.

- Procedure for reporting a fire or other emergency.
- Means of communication available to summon help if needed.

**THE FACILITY LAYOUT (FLOOR PLAN) MUST INCLUDE:**

- Locations of **ALL** emergency exits (clearly marked).
- Locations of corridors, pathways and aisles leading to **ALL** emergency exits (clearly marked).
- Primary and secondary emergency evacuation routes. (clearly distinguishable)
- Emergency evacuation staging area(s) (clearly marked)
- All planned activity areas (brief description of activity being conducted in each area)
- Location of significant decorative displays.
- Location(s) of an portable power equipment (such as a generator)

**KEY POINTS TO CONSIDER WHEN FORMULATING YOUR WRITTEN EMERGENCY PLAN:**

- Ensure that all attendants of the event are adults and are trained in the duties to be performed in case of fire, panic or other emergency, including the operation of portable fire extinguishers, sounding or activating the fire alarm, calling 9-1-1, and evacuation of attendees.
- Emergency procedures and evacuation plans must be reviewed and discussed with all facility and event staff to identify the procedures and actions to be taken in the case of fire, power outage or other emergency requiring immediate action.
- A minimum of one adult shall supervise each activity area and shall perform appropriate duties in case of fire, panic or other emergency while the event is in progress. The attendant shall have a working flashlight for use in the event of power failure.

Facility and site inspections will be conducted on the day of the event by a representative of the Fire Marshal's Office. All required permits will be issued upon completion of the inspection.

These inspections are **not automatically scheduled** upon approval of the facility layout & emergency plan and must be scheduled by calling the Fire Marshal's Office at 703-792-6360 at least 48-72 hours prior to the event taking place.

## **FIRE DEPARTMENT ACCESS**

- Emergency vehicle access to the building or event facility shall be maintained at all times. If the facility has designated and approved fire lanes, it is unlawful to park or obstruct such designated areas. Consider this when planning for parking and advise all attendees to observe fire lane regulations to avoid getting a ticket and/or having a vehicle towed.
- Parking is prohibited within 15' of a fire hydrant.

## **FIRE PROTECTION EQUIPMENT**

- Fire protection system equipment and warning devices such as fire alarm panel(s), fire sprinkler heads, fire department hose connections, pull stations, audible and visual alarm devices (horns and strobes), and fire extinguishers shall not be obstructed from view or operation by any decorative material, displays or storage.

## **EXITS AND EVACUATION ROUTES**

- No decorations or other objects shall be placed in such a manner as to obstruct access to the emergency exits or the exits themselves.
- Required emergency exits shall be continuously maintained free from obstructions or impediments to full instant use in the case of fire or other emergency.
- Emergency egress doors shall be readily operable from the egress side without the use of a key or special knowledge or effort.
- The locking or chaining of emergency exit doors is prohibited.
- Emergency exits and emergency exit corridors are to remain free of obstructions, combustible mats, tables and chairs, displays, storage and/or persons, and shall be accessible at all times.
- All exit signs shall be illuminated and visible. Emergency lighting shall be operational.

## **ELECTRICAL SAFETY**

- All light strings, lighting decorations, and electrical appliances shall be listed by a recognized testing laboratory such as UL or FM.
- Listed lighting decorations may be used as long as contact is not made with any combustible material.
- Lights with loose sockets, frayed or bare wires, and lights that produce excessive heat or other dangerous conditions shall be prohibited.
- Extension cords must be of the heavy duty type, shall not be plugged together to make longer cords, and shall not be overloaded.
- Extension cords with excessive physical damage and/or frayed or bare wires shall be prohibited.
- Extension cords shall **NOT** be extended through walls or ceilings, or under floor coverings.
- Extension cords shall be secured to reduce tripping hazards (tape cords to floors).

## **DECORATIONS AND DECORATIVE MATERIALS**

- Decorative materials shall either be inherently flame retardant or treated with an appropriate flame retardant product.
- Documentation of flame retardance from the manufacturer or documentation of treatment shall be available at the time of inspection.
- A sample of each material shall be available at the time of inspection to assess the effectiveness of any treatment.
- Artificial decorative vegetation shall be flame resistant or flame retardant.
- Cornstalks, hay bales, stacks of newspapers or like materials are prohibited.
- Informational handouts on flame retardant materials are available from the office of the Fire Marshal.
- No decorations shall be hung from any fire protection devices (sprinkler heads, emergency lighting, or fire alarm equipment).

## **OPEN FLAMES AND SMOKING**

- Unapproved open flame devices such as candles and lanterns **shall be prohibited inside the building.**

- Self-contained open flame devices may be used **outside** of the building with approval.
- Smoking shall only be permitted in approved areas.

## **SPECIAL EFFECTS**

- Vapor or smoke producing effects, such as smoke machines and dry ice are not permitted due to the possibility of fire alarm activation, obscuring of exits and exit signs, and the possibility of increased panic in an emergency.
- In the event of fire alarm activation or any emergency, a plan shall be in place to **immediately stop** any music and all audio-visual special effects.

## **COOKING SAFETY**

- Outdoor grilling shall be located 15 feet away from the building and any exit and a fire extinguisher of minimum 2A:10B:C rating shall be provided.