ONTARIO FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE PROTECTION STANDARD

SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR HAUNTED HOUSES
STANDARD #F-003 EFFECTIVE 11-01-05 PAGES 5

PURPOSE

This guide is intended to provide safety standards and regulations for the construction and operation of temporary structures.

SCOPE

These regulations shall apply to temporary Haunted Houses, Ghosts Walks, or similar operations open to the public where combustible, decorative material and confusing sounds and/or visual effects are present.

AUTHORITY

2007 California Building Code, 2007 California Fire Code, and the California Code of Regulations, Title 19.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this guideline, certain terms and words are defined as follows:

Haunted House: A temporary or permanent building or structure, or portion thereof, which contains a system that transports passengers or provides a walkway through a course so arranged that the means of egress are not apparent due to theatrical distractions, not visible due to low illumination, are disguised, or are not readily available due to the method of transportation through the building or structure.

Ghost Walks: Similar to a Haunted House, and may include indoor and/or outdoor areas where egress to a public way is similarly not readily identifiable.

PERMITS

1. A minimum of two (2) weeks prior to the event, a permit application shall be submitted to the Ontario Fire Department. An inspection shall be required for final approval.

2. Additional permits may be required. Contact the Ontario Fire Department for Details.

3. Permit application packet should include the following:

   A. Dimensional site plan shall indicate proximity of event building to other structures or hazardous areas and path of travel from event building or area to the public way.

   B. Floor plan showing the following:

      - Dimensions (total square footage, width of exits, aisles or interior exit pathways, etc.)
      - Locations of exits, exit signs, and emergency lighting units
      - Locations of fire extinguishers
      - Locations of electrical panel(s) and light switches
      - Locations of smoke detectors and/or fire alarm panel
      - Normal use of any structures(s) i.e. auditorium, school, church, etc.
      - Staff positions

   C. Written emergency procedure (see Emergency Planning section below).

   D. Haunted House Permit Acknowledgement Form (to be completed by the City Building/Planning Department having jurisdiction).

REQUIREMENTS

1. **Emergency Planning**

   A. Maximum occupant load (which shall include staff) shall be determined during plan review. A sign stating maximum occupant capacity shall be posted in a visible location near the entrance and staff shall control the flow of patrons so as not to exceed this limit.

   B. A written emergency procedure plan shall be provided with permit application packet. All employees shall be trained in emergency procedures.

   C. Emergency procedure shall include training of staff and familiarization with fire alarm tone. Specific personnel shall be designated to turn off all distracting noises (i.e. sound system) and turn on lights when alerted by either fire alarm system or otherwise notified of an emergency condition.

   D. This event shall be adequately staffed to control the occupant load and assist patrons in exiting should an evacuation become necessary. Staffing level shall be determined upon review of plans and may be increased at the discretion of the inspector.

   E. All emergency staff shall carry flashlights and know the location of all exits, fire extinguishers, light switches, electrical panels, and emergency phones.

F. A fire drill may be required.

G. Phone communication shall be readily available for the purpose of calling 911 in the event of an emergency.

2. **Exits**

A. Two exits shall be provided from each room with an occupant load of 50 or more. Required exit door shall swing in the direction of egress.

B. Illuminated exit signs, with battery back up, shall be provided at each exit serving an occupant load of 50 or more. Non-illuminated exit signs shall be provided for all exits serving an occupant load less than 50.

C. Exit doors serving an occupant load of 50 or more shall not be provided with a latch or lock unless it is panic hardware.

D. Emergency lighting, with battery back up, shall be provided in all rooms, areas and exit pathways when serving an occupant load of 100 or more.

E. Exhibit and decorative materials shall not obstruct, confuse or obscure exits, exit pathways, exit signs or emergency lighting units.

F. An additional pathway marking, including low level marking and signs, may be required at time of field inspection.

3. **Fire Protection**

A. All amusement buildings larger than 1,000 sq. ft. shall have an approved automatic sprinkler system.

B. Approved automatic fire sprinkler systems, when provided, shall not be obstructed nor altered. For additional information contact the Ontario Fire Department.

C. Approved automatic smoke detection systems, when provided, shall not be obstructed nor altered and shall be in accordance with California Building Code as required for amusement buildings.

D. Provide a public address system in accordance with the California Building Code as required for amusement buildings.

<u>Exception</u>: When the total floor area is less than 1,000 square feet, and the travel distance to an exit is less than 50 feet, manually activated device(s) suitable for sounding an alarm or other approved method of alerting staff, shall be provided as approved by the Ontario Fire Department. The alarm shall be distinctive in tone and audible throughout the haunted house/area.

E. Fire extinguishers shall be:

- Minimum 2A10BC rated.
- Properly mounted (top of unit between 3 and 5 feet from floor).
- Visible and accessible at all times and clearly illuminated or marked with reflective tape.
- Located within 75 feet travel distance from anywhere in the building.

F. Decorative material shall not obstruct fire sprinklers, fire extinguishers, or any other fire protection equipment.

4. **Electrical**

A. Extension cords shall be of heavy commercial type, UL listed, in good condition, and shall be appropriate for its use.

B. Only UL Listed power strips with over-current protection shall be used when the number of outlets provided is inadequate. Power strips shall be plugged directly into provided outlets, and shall not be plugged into one another in series.

C. All extension cords and power strips shall be adequately protected from foot traffic ("Bridged") if paths of travel cannot be avoided.

D. An electrical permit may be required. Contact your local building department for requirements.

E. Flood and strobe lights shall be plugged directly into a wall outlet, a listed multi-plug power strip, or a single listed extension cord. For string lighting, reference the manufacturer's installation guidelines for the maximum number of string lights that may be connected. When plugging the string lights together, the total amperage of all the light strings shall be calculated to ensure they do not exceed the amperage of the extension cord and circuit.

5. **Decorative Materials**

All decorative materials (decorations, drapes, backdrops and props) shall be either inherently flame retardant and labeled as such, or shall be treated with a flame retardant that is registered with the California State Fire Marshal. Any material not appropriately labeled, as fire retardant, shall be flame tested.

Note: The flame test shall consist of putting a flame to a sample of the material by a match or lighter. The test shall be conducted outside the building on a specimen of the material approximately 3 inches wide by 10 inches long and oriented at a 45-degree angle. When testing, the flame shall be applied at the bottom edge of the material for a period of up to 12 seconds. If the material fails to ignite, or if it ignites and self extinguishes when the flame source is removed, the material shall be considered flame retardant.

Miscellaneous:

- Care and consideration shall be used with respect to smoke generator and smoke detector locations. Use of smoke generator may be restricted if determined to be incompatible with spoke detector(s).
- "NO SMOKING" signs shall be provided at entrance and throughout exhibit.
- Storage and/or use of flammable or combustible liquids, gasses and solids are prohibited.
- Open flame is prohibited.
- Good housekeeping shall be maintained throughout exhibit and exit pathways.
- Portable generators should be kept at a minimum distance of 20' from all temporary or permanent structures.