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Fire Prevention Guidelines for Halloween

This guide outlines general requirements for the operation of a Haunted House. The requirements of the 2022 Oregon Fire Code (OFC) Appendix Q Fire Prevention Guidelines for Haunted Houses and Similar Temporary Installations must be met and are incorporated in this guideline.

A Fire Prevention Permit is Required

At the beginning of the planning phase of your project, contact the Gresham Fire Department (GFD) Life Safety Division office at (503) 618-2355. An inspector will meet with your organization to identify potential fire and life safety hazards. It is our wish to prevent expensive and unnecessary changes and last minute delays in operation of your haunted house.

The application for Fire Prevention Permit must be submitted at least one week prior to the scheduled fire inspection. A fire inspection must be performed and all outstanding violations must be abated before occupancy by the public.

Exiting and crowd control:

- In any facility using the maze concept there shall be no dead-end corridors and there shall be an obvious exit out of any maze every 50 feet of linear travel.
- Exits shall be a minimum of 3 feet wide and 6 feet 8 inches tall
- All aisles shall be a minimum of 4 feet wide and 6 feet 8 inches high.
- All stairways shall be illuminated at a level of at least 1 foot candle (10.8 lux)
- The number of occupants in the facility at any time shall be limited to a number determined by GFD and listed on your Fire Prevention Permit. The Fire Prevention Permit must be posted at all times.
- Groups shall consist of not more than 20 persons.
- Each group of children age 12 and under shall be accompanied and supervised by a staff person who is 18 years of age or older.
- Exits need to be obvious, marked and signed with luminous signs. Blocking, locking or in any way impeding ready access to any marked or required exit is prohibited.
- Provide an adequate number of responsible supervisors to assist in exiting and to reduce panic, should an emergency occur.
- All staff guides shall be provided with two-way communications that have been demonstrated to be capable of being heard throughout the entire facility at all times the building is operating. This includes the ability to be heard over any audible sound effects.
- All staff shall have in their possession an operable flashlight and be completely familiar with the facility and the approved emergency plan.
- There must be at least one phone available for supervisors to call 911 in an emergency.

Decorating, combustible materials and building modifications:

- Discourage the use of combustible materials whenever possible.
- When combustible materials are brought into a public assembly area, they must be treated or protected so they are essentially rendered and maintained flame-proof in a manner acceptable to the Fire Marshal.

- Flame-retardant coatings shall comply with NFPA 701/ASTM E-84 testing requirements and applied per manufacturer's guidelines.
- Treated material needs to be tested prior to acceptance.
- Ready-made costumes, masks, wigs and beards should be labeled "flame proof." We recommend buying only those items marked as such. Homemade costumes, paper bag masks, etc., are combustible until treated.
- Harvest decorations such as corn stalks, dry branches and baled straw are all highly combustible until treated with a fire retardant.
- Keep combustible decorations out of exit pathways, stairs and away from heaters or fireplaces.
- The use of temporary heaters are prohibited
- Open flame devices are prohibited. Use dry cell batteries and bulbs to illuminate jack-o-lanterns.

Fire Protection:

- The fire alarm and or sprinkler system must be in complete operation and have current maintenance records. No alterations, obstructions or changes may be made to alter the performance of the fire protection system.
- Generally speaking smoke machines are not compatible with fire alarm systems and therefore prohibited in buildings containing fire alarm systems.
- A sufficient number of fire extinguishers shall be provided so that the maximum travel distance to any extinguisher is not more than 50 feet.
- The minimum size fire extinguisher required is a 2A:10BC. Extinguishers shall be conspicuously mounted and in plain view. All staff must be aware of fire extinguisher locations and instructed in the proper use of the extinguishers.
- Any sound effects must not interfere, mimic or create confusion with regard to the audibility of the fire alarm system.

Safe Use of Electricity:

- All electrical installations shall meet the requirements of the Oregon Electrical Specialty Code. Any modifications made to the electrical system must be performed under benefit of permit from the City of Gresham.
- Special attention should be paid to assure proper grounding of all electrical appliances.
- Multi plug power strips may be used when plugged directly into outlet.

Miscellaneous:

- Any construction performed under the requirements and/or purview of the Oregon Structural Specialty code must be done under benefit of permit by the City of Gresham.
- LPG and all flammable liquids or gases are prohibited any building used for public assembly purposes.
- "NO SMOKING" signs shall be posted at every entry point of building.
- Emergency vehicle access must be maintained at all times. Enforce the "NO PARKING – FIRE LANE" rules (20-foot minimum width).

We recommend that you appoint a responsible and fire-conscious adult to the clean-up crew after the gathering. Compliance with the requirements in this guideline does not preclude the necessity for compliance with other applicable laws and regulations.