



15. Fire and Safety Guidelines

The National Fire Protection Association Life Safety Code is the established safety standard for events. The code, as well as standard operating procedures established in cooperation with DC fire and safety agencies are included in the following fire and safety guidelines:

A. Cables across Doorways

Cables or hoses required for power, audio, video, lighting or any other applications are not permitted on the floor across doorways. We have installed cable trays above service doors in the ballroom to carry these cables. Please inform all production vendors to plan for this as they design your event.

B. Candles

Lit candles and other open flame devices are not permitted in exhibit booths. Lit candles may be used at special events such as banquets only under the following conditions:

- ★ Candles must have a solid base and flames must be enclosed. Votive candles and “hurricane lamp” candles are examples of acceptable candles.
- ★ Candles must be placed on tables or other stable surfaces.
- ★ Samples of all candles proposed for use must be submitted in advance to the event manager for approval.

Tapered candles, candelabras, votives hanging from décor are examples of candles that are not permitted.

C. Compressed Gases/Flammable Liquids/Aerosols

The use, display or storing of compressed gasses, flammable liquids or dangerous chemicals is prohibited without prior written authorization. Pressurized containers having flammable propellants (aerosols) are prohibited without prior written authorization from the DC fire marshal.

D. Cooking in Exhibit Booths

Cooking is permitted in exhibit booths when food or food equipment are products featured in the event, and with advance written approval. Approval is obtained from the Center and the DC Fire Department Fire Prevention Division after the submission of the exhibitor cooking request form. Please note the following:

- ★ Devices producing open flames are not allowed in exhibit areas.
- ★ The use or storage of any flammable or combustible liquids, compressed gases cylinders, hazardous materials or chemicals as fuel is strictly prohibited.
- ★ Frying equipment must be equipped with a grease shield.
- ★ A fire extinguisher with a minimum rating of 3A40BC must be displayed in each booth that features cooking.

- ★ Deep fat fryers, wood or coal burning equipment and bottled gas cylinders are prohibited without prior advance written approval from WCC and the DC Fire Prevention Division.
- ★ After review, the DC Fire Marshall may require certain types of commercial cooking equipment that produce grease laden vapors to install a supplemental exhaust system over the equipment.
- ★ The DC Fire Department Fire Prevention Division and WCC will inspect, and may require a test of cooking equipment before show opening.

Events involving cooking or food preparation must provide an appropriate number of utensil clean-up areas. In addition, please provide holding tanks such as grease barrels for disposal of cooking residue such as oil and grease. Disposal of cooking residue into Center drainage system is prohibited.

Our service partners are able to provide portable sinks and grease barrels at prevailing rates. Consult your event manager for further information.

E. Crate and Boneyard Storage

Empty crate storage is permitted only with prior approval and within specific guidelines. See crate storage and boneyards in the “Exhibit Halls” section above.

F. Decorations

All materials used for decorating including drapes, curtains, table coverings, skirts, carpet or any other materials must be constructed of flameproof material or treated with an approved fire-retardant solution. We encourage you to have fire retardancy certificates for the materials on site. Spot-testing may be performed at any time by the DC Fire Department Fire Prevention Division.

G. Gasoline and Diesel Fuel

Gasoline-powered equipment such as industrial vacuum cleaners for show carpet cleaning are permitted. Refueling is not permitted inside exhibit halls. Gasoline-powered equipment may not be stored inside exhibit halls unless battery cables are disconnected and fuel tanks are locked.

Gasoline, kerosene, combustible gases or other flammable liquids may not be stored inside the Center.

Use of diesel fuel in the Center is prohibited.

H. Electrical Equipment

Electrical equipment must meet applicable National Electrical Codes. Electrical fixtures and fittings must be U.L. listed. 14-gauge wire or better is required for all connections. All extension cords must be 3-wire grounded. Only Washington Convention Center staff and authorized service partners are authorized to move Center electrical equipment. Utility panels and mechanical equipment rooms may not be blocked under any circumstances.

I. Exits

Exit doors may not be obstructed, locked or held open. Nothing may be placed within 15 feet of a means-of-egress doorway. Exit signs may not be obstructed from view by booths, decorations or any other objects or hanging materials.

Temporary illuminated exit signs, or large exit signs of dimension approved by the Center, must be installed at/near any exits whose view is blocked by drape or structure, such as within a room constructed in an exhibit hall. These signs should be illuminated by battery power.

J. Fire Fighting and Emergency Equipment

Fire fighting and emergency equipment may not be blocked or obstructed under any circumstances. Fire hose connections, extinguisher cabinets, fire alarm call stations, strobe lights, automatic external defibrillators, adaptive escape chairs, and First Aid Rooms must be visible at all times.

K. Fog and Smoke Machines and Lasers

Water-based chemical fog and smoke machines are permitted with advance notification. Fog and smoke machines may not be operated in common areas where the effect could enter an adjacent event's leased space.

Lasers are permitted with advance notification in locations where access to a water source is safely identified.

A schedule for use of fog and smoke machines and lasers that includes rehearsals and event times must be submitted to your event manager in advance so that appropriate inspections and ventilation measures are taken.

L. Hazardous Chemicals and Materials

The use of hazardous chemicals and materials are strictly prohibited without prior written approval. Most hazardous chemicals and materials, including but not limited to pesticides, herbicides, poisons, flammable and combustible liquids, hazardous gases, pressure cylinders and tanks, and hazardous chemicals including oxidizers are prohibited inside the Center.

M. Hazardous Waste

You are responsible for the removal of hazardous waste from the center and must comply with all applicable federal and local regulations. Hazardous waste includes materials that are ignitable, corrosive, reactive, toxic, or biohazardous. These products include paint, ink, certain chemicals, particularly petroleum-based and ketone-based, and certain medical supplies.

Costs incurred by the Center, including administrative expenses, for the removal of hazardous waste left in or about the Center will be billed at prevailing rates and any fines incurred will be passed on to you.

N. Medical Testing and Waste

Medical testing is permitted with advance written approval when in conjunction with an appropriate event.

Medical tests must be performed by licensed practitioners. The use of animal or human organs or body parts must conform with federal and local regulations.

All medical waste must be removed at the end of the event according to federal and local regulations.

O. Propane

Propane tanks may not be stored inside the Center. Propane tanks must be stored in locked storage cages on the loading docks. Contractors must provide their own storage cages.

P. Pyrotechnics

The use of pyrotechnics is strictly controlled and monitored and must be approved in advance. Customers requesting the use of pyrotechnics must hire a federally licensed pyrotechnics contractor and must obtain all relevant permits from the DC Fire Department Fire Prevention Division. Consult your event manager for further information and guidelines.

Q. Rigging / Overhead Hanging Procedures

The Center has designated its service partners Projection/TeamPro and HiTech Electric as exclusive providers of all rigging except for lightweight loads such as banners and signs under 200 pounds. All rigging and hanging from hang points in the Center must conform with all national and local safety codes and is subject to mandatory approval by the Center. The following general procedures have been established to ensure the safe installation of overhead rigging (including hanging of banners, signs or equipment), and to ensure the protection of the structure and finished surfaces of the building.

We reserve the right to stop any installation of rigging if in our opinion the installation is not proceeding in a safe and prudent manner.

- a.** All attachments to the interior or exterior building must be temporary, and of a type and process approved in advance
- b.** Overhead rigging or hanging of equipment may only be performed by persons who have been certified in all safe hanging procedures, including the use of OSHA-certified personal fall arrest systems, and the safe use and operation of overhead rigging, powered work platforms and man-lifts for overhead work.
- c.** All equipment used for overhead rigging installations must be certified as safe for intended application.
- d.** An effective two-way voice communication system between overhead installation crew and supervisor must be used during all overhead installations.
- e.** All areas below overhead hanging installations must be properly protected from damage caused by overhead working platforms.
- f.** Visible public notice of overhead work being installed in public areas, such as cautionary signage, barricades, orange traffic cones or similar systems must be in place before overhead work may begin.
- g.** All crews performing overhead rigging installations must include at least one ground person to direct personnel away from the work area while overhead work is performed.
- h.** All work performed on the Center's roof must be done under the supervision of Center personnel.
- i.** Each person working on the roof of the Center must walk or perform work only from the roof path system
- j.** Each person working on the roof of the Center must utilize an OSHA-approved personal fall arrest system that is properly secured to the roof anchorages and tie-off points.
- k.** Exterior rigging installations on the L Street facades may be secured to the vertical aluminum truss work provided that the truss work is protected by approved padding.

- I. Lifts to be used for exterior hanging must be driven to and from the jobsites only from the M Street loading dock entrances. Lifts may not be driven through public doors.
- m. The proposed installation schedule must be included in production schedule submitted to your event manager. The event manager will confirm the approved times for installation in writing.

R. Smoking

In accordance with DC regulations, **the Washington Convention Center is a non-smoking facility**. Smoking is prohibited inside the Center. We reserve the right to remove violators.

S. Temporary Structures

There must be at least two (2) means of egress from any temporary hardwall structure in excess of 200 square feet built in the Center. Temporary structures may not have a cover or ceiling unless the sprinklers will be able to permeate it. This must be approved in advance by the DC Fire Department.

T. Vehicles on Display

Section 314.4 of the International Fire Code specifies the following.

Liquid- or gas-fueled vehicles, fueled equipment, boats or other motorcraft shall not be located indoors except as follows:

1. Batteries are disconnected.
2. Fuel in fuel tanks does not exceed one-quarter tank or 5 gallons (19 L) (whichever is least).
3. Fuel tanks and fill openings are closed and sealed to prevent tampering.
4. Vehicles, fueled equipment, boats or other motorcraft equipment are not fueled or defueled within the building.

U. X-Ray Equipment

The DC fire code prohibits the use of x-ray equipment and other radiated materials in the convention center. Use of this equipment is only permissible in controlled environments such as medical facilities in order to minimize unnecessary exposure and potential HAZMAT conditions.