



Suggested Guidelines for The Setup & Operation of Special Amusement Structures/Halloween Houses- 2014

The Department of Safety and Professional Services (DPS) Division of Industry Services and the Fire Prevention Program have received numerous questions and concerns from fire departments, service groups, and other external customers over the years regarding special amusement structures.

Haunted Houses

The following information is provided as a guideline for Division of Industry Service (DIS) customers, both internal and external, on special amusement structures. This information is provided as a guideline only. It is not an official code interpretation or DIS policy. The local fire department or authority having jurisdiction retains fire prevention authority over these structures. A municipal fire or building code official may allow a building or a portion of a building to be used temporarily in a manner that differs from the approved use for the building or space, or may approve a temporary building to be used by the public, subject to all of the provisions stipulated in either SPS 314.01(05) or SPS 361.03(11) for temporary use.

1. Vehicles should be placed a minimum of 20 feet from the structure.
2. All decorations, wall coverings, etc., should be fire retardant and meet with the approval of the local authority having jurisdiction (AHJ). Where used, decorations should be kept well away from all heat sources, light bulbs, heaters, etc.
3. Purchase only those costumes, wigs and props labeled as flame resistant or retardant. Costumes should be made without billowing or long trailing features that present a higher risk of ignition.
4. "No Smoking" signs should be displayed and no open flames, candles, torch lights or other sources of ignition should be present. Flashlights should be used where appropriate.
5. Fire extinguishers, both type and placement, should comply with NFPA 10.
6. No flammable liquids should be allowed within 50 feet of the structure.
7. No LPG tanks or cylinders should be allowed in the structure or within 25 feet of the structure.
8. Housekeeping should be maintained at all times with no straw, hay, cornstalks or dried flowers, etc., allowed in the structure.
9. Structure should have a setback of 20 feet from property line and any other structures.
10. Structure should meet load requirements (live, dead, and wind loads).
11. Two exits should be required with the standard exit door requirement being met. In addition, all exit passageways should be a minimum of 36 inches wide, with a minimum of 2.5 F/C being required for illumination. The AHJ may modify this suggestion (2.5 F/C for illumination) by the use of attendants.
12. Electrical wiring and components should meet the requirements of SPS 316/NEC 70. Extension cords may be used per SPS 314.
13. Smoke detection may be required by AHJ.
14. Sufficient attendants should be present on-site to conduct emergency operations in case of fire or medical emergency. Children should be supervised at all times.
15. Life safety hazards such as, but not limited to, the generation of artificial fog are to be subject to the approval of the AHJ.
16. Surfaces for walking should be well drained and kept free of debris, obstructions, projections, tripping hazards, and other such hazards. Stair treads, etc., should meet the rate of rise and tread per Wisconsin Administrative Code.