



# STANDARDS FOR OUTDOOR ASSEMBLY EVENTS

## A Guideline for Palo Alto Event Operators, Promoters and Vendors

This Guideline was developed to assist event operators and vendors remain in compliance with the Palo Alto Fire Department requirements for Fire Code regulated activities at outdoor public assembly events.

### Definitions

**Booth.** A temporary structure erected to create an enclosure for occupancy by persons to prepare, make sales from and serve food. Booths are typically made of wood (2 x 4 framing with plywood exterior) and may have a fabric or pliable material roof cover.

**Cooking.** Where food is prepared by a heating or cooking process such as, but not limited to, grilling, frying, barbecuing, flambé, deep fat frying, baking, warming, or boiling. All such operations shall also have a permit from the Santa Clara County Department of Environmental Health. Food warming using open flame appliances and individual canned-heat (e.g. 'Sterno') containers exceeding 8 ounces is considered cooking.

**Mobile Food Vendor.** A food truck, trailer or push-cart.

**Tent.** A structure, enclosure, umbrella structure or shelter with or without sidewalls or drops, constructed of fabric or pliable material supported by any manner except by air or the contents it protects. (2019 CFC)

**Umbrella Structure.** A structure, enclosure or shelter with or without sidewalls or drops, constructed of fabric or pliable material supported by a central pole or poles. (2019 CFC)

### Tents Requiring a Permit (No Cooking)

Tents require a permit when vendor tents/booths:

1. with sidewalls exceed 400 sq. ft.,
2. without sidewalls exceed 700 sq. ft.
3. are designed for use by 10 or more people (e.g. > 10' x 10')

#### Point of Information

More than 700 sq. ft. of aggregate tent area (e.g. 7 - 10'x10' tents) without sides or more than 400 sq. ft. of aggregate tent area (e.g. 4- 10' x 10' tents) with one or more sides, shall be treated as a "tent requiring a permit" under this standard. Each group of seven 10' x 10' tents without sides or four 10'x10' tents with one or more sides must be separated by not less than 10 feet to be considered separate tent areas.

When a permit is required, tents/booths must comply with the following:

- Be located at least:
  - 20 ft. from lot lines, permanent buildings, cooking booths or open-flame cooking appliances, amusement rides, generators and internal combustion engines. [CFC3103.8.2]
  - 20 feet from vehicles necessary to the operation and vehicles parked on public streets.
  - 100 feet from other parked vehicles. [CCR Title 19, Division 1, §312]
  - 10 ft. from outdoor drinking and dining areas.
- Have a minimum clear space of:
  - 20 ft. on the front side (all public aisles shall be at least 20 feet wide).
  - 3 ft. on each side and 10 ft. on the back.
- Have required number of exits based on occupant load and at least one exit 3-ft. wide by 6'8" high.
- Not obstruct exit paths from permanent buildings or other vendor booths/tents.
- Not obstruct fire hydrants.
- The sidewalls, drops and tops of tents and canopies shall be of flame resistant material or treated with a flame retardant in an approved manner.
- A California State Fire Marshal approval tag shall be permanently fixed to the structure.**
- If tent walls and/or ceiling is covered in taffeta (i.e. velon) the fabric must also be certified by OSFM as flame resistant.
- Have a 5-ft. wide separation aisle between every 200 lineal feet of Vendor Booths/Tents.
- Exit signage.
- Post maximum occupant load signage at each required exit.
- Fire Extinguisher – minimum rating; maximum travel distance.

### **Cooking Booths/Tents and Outdoor Cooking Areas**

- All cooking and food warming appliances inside booths or tents shall be:
  - electric,
  - use canned-heat canisters (e.g. Sterno) that do not exceed 8 ounces, or
  - Steam tables having an entirely enclosed flame and an exterior fuel source.
- Open-flame cooking and open-flame food warming inside booths or tents is strictly prohibited.  
**Exceptions:**
  - Food warming with individual Sterno canisters that do not exceed 8 ounces.
  - Kettle Corn vendor (only) is allowed to operate a single LPG-fueled kettle inside a compliant tent to comply with Health Department mandate.

Cooking Booths/Tents and outdoor cooking areas must:

- Be located at least:
  - 20 ft. from permanent buildings, amusement rides, stages, generators, internal combustion engines and vehicle parking.
  - 20 ft. from tents requiring a permit.
  - 10 ft. from non-cooking vendor booths and tents and outdoor drinking and dining areas
- Have a minimum clear space of:
  - 20 ft. on the front side (all public aisles shall be at least 20 feet wide).
  - 10 ft. on back side and 3 ft. between other cooking booths or tents.

## PALO ALTO FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU - OUTDOOR ASSEMBLY EVENTS

- 5 ft. between the public and all cooking appliances located in the outdoor cooking area.  
Cooking appliances must be separated from the public by physical guards or fencing.
- Have at least one exit 3-ft. wide by 6'8" high.
- Not obstruct exiting from permanent buildings, emergency vehicle access lanes or fire hydrants.
- The sidewalls, drops and tops of tents and canopies shall be of flame resistant material or treated with a flame retardant in an approved manner. A California State Fire Marshal tag shall be permanently fixed to the structure.
- Flooring materials used within cooking booths and tents and in outdoor cooking areas shall be non-combustible or fire-retardant. (*Exception: 3/8" plywood or fire-resistant tarp.*)
- A 10-foot separation is required between 2 rows of cooking booths/tents placed back to back or food vendors backed up to a service aisle or other non-public area.
- A minimum 10-ft. separation shall be provided between every 10 connected cooking booths/tents.
- A minimum 20-ft. separation shall be provided between every 150 lineal feet of cooking booths/tents.
- No decorative materials shall be located inside cooking booths and tents.
- Table coverings used under open-flame cooking and food warming appliances, including food warmers using Sterno inside cooking booths/tents, shall be of flame resistant material or treated with a flame retardant in an approved manner.
- All interior cooking appliances shall be FM, UL or NSF evaluated and approved.
- All cooking appliances shall have an ON-OFF valve located far enough away from the appliance to be safely shut off in case of fire.
- All cooking and heating appliances shall be located at least 18-inches from the interior walls of the tent and other combustible materials.
- Smoking is prohibited within all booths, tents and canopies.
- Trailers shall be disconnected from tow vehicle and the vehicle parked outside of the public area of the event venue.

### Food Warming

- Food warming allowed inside cooking booths/tents:
  - electric appliances,
  - individual Sterno canisters (not exceeding 8 oz)
  - LPG-fueled (propane) steam tables with an enclosed flame
- Food warming **strictly prohibited** inside a booth or tent.
  - individual Sterno canisters larger than 8 ounces
  - any appliance with an open flame

### Propane/Butane (LPG) Cooking

- Only LPG-fueled cooking appliances (e.g. rice cookers, griddles) and steam tables having an enclosed flame are allowed inside cooking booths and tents.
- LPG cylinders are prohibited inside booths and tents. All LPG cylinders shall be located **outside**.

#### LPG used or stored in outdoor vendor cooking areas shall conform to all of the following:

- The maximum capacity of any individual LPG cylinder connected for use to a single appliance shall be 10 gallons.

## PALO ALTO FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU - OUTDOOR ASSEMBLY EVENTS

- Manifolding multiple LPG cylinders to a single appliance is prohibited.
- Manifolding multiple appliances to a single LPG cylinder is not allowed.
- Not more than 30 gallons of LPG shall be connected for use in an individual vendor cooking area.
- LPG cylinders connected for use shall not be located within 36 inches (3 ft.) of the sidewalls of a cooking booth or tent.
- LPG-fueled appliances shall not be located within 5 ft. of a cooking booth or tent.
- LPG container shall be protected from falling or being knocked over (e.g. placed in milk crate).
- A minimum of 5 ft. of clear space shall be maintained between the public and all cooking appliances located in the outdoor cooking area.
- Cooking appliances must be separated from the public by physical guards or fencing.
- Exchange of LPG cylinders during the event is prohibited.
- Cylinders must have quick fit disconnect fittings and be equipped with an (OPD) Overfill Protection Device.
- Cylinders having a capacity exceeding 5 gallons shall be equipped with a pressure regulator.
- Shut off valves and regulators shall be provided at each fuel source.
- Hoses shall be of a type approved for use with the equipment and LPG.
- LPG cylinders in use shall be secured in an upright position, protected from damage or tampering by the public, and located so that the tank shut off valve is accessible to the vendor.
- LPG cylinders not connected for use shall be turned off, secured in an upright position, protected from damage or tampering by the public, and located a minimum of 20 feet from booths and tents.
- The booth operator shall test all connections for leaks with a soap and water solution prior to the event.
- LP-gas tanks not in use (empty) shall be turned off and located at least 10 ft. away from the cooking area.

### Charcoal, Wood and Other Solid-Fuel Cooking

- Charcoal, wood and solid-fuel cooking is **prohibited inside booths.**
- Storage of lighter fluid is **prohibited inside booths.**
- Charcoal, wood and solid-fuel cooking shall be located a minimum of 3 ft. from deep fat fryers and other open flame cooking operations.
- Only electric starters or commercially sold lighter fluid is allowed.
- Coals and ashes shall be disposed of in metal containers approved by the fire code official.
- Cooking method shall not create high flames or excessive smoke or flying brands/ash.

### Open-Flame Cooking and Flame

- Open-flame cooking operations shall **be located outside of booths** and at least 3 ft. from any deep fat frying operations.

**Exception:** Kettle Corn vendor is allowed to operate a single kettle inside a cooking booth or tent as mandated by the Health Department provided the Booth / Tent location and setbacks are pre-approved by the fire code official.

## Deep Fat Frying Operations

- Deep fat frying operations shall be located outside of booths and at least 3 ft. from any open-flame cooking operations.
- Deep fat frying appliance(s) shall have a minimum 36-inch working clearance around the front and both sides at all times.
- Deep fat frying operations are limited to a maximum of 10 gallons of cooking grease
- Deep fat fryers shall be provided with a cover that can be placed over the entire cooking vessel in order to smother a fire. The cover shall be easily accessible by the cooking operator. Deep fat fryer units shall have an attached cover that can be lowered onto the surface.
- Deep fat fryers shall be equipped with a temperature regulating device or other method of regulating temperatures approved by the fire code official.
- Surfaces shall be kept clean of any residual grease build-up.
- Booths containing deep fat frying operations require at least one type 'K'-rated fire extinguisher.
- Non-combustible absorbent (e.g. kitty litter) shall be available in deep fat frying areas to clean up spills/drips.

## Fire Extinguishers

- All cooking operations shall be equipped with a minimum 2A:10BC fire extinguisher. This is in addition to the "K" type extinguisher required for deep fat frying operations. [CCR Title 19, Division 1, §319(c)]
- Extinguishers shall be clearly visible, readily accessible, and located adjacent to exits or exit pathways, no closer than 10 feet to cooking appliances.
- A fire extinguisher having a minimum rating of 2A:10BC shall be visible and readily accessible at least every 75 feet in non-cooking vendor areas.
- One fire extinguisher having a minimum rating of 2A shall be provided in every tent having a floor area between 500-1,000 square feet plus one 2A extinguisher in each auxiliary adjacent tent. One additional extinguisher shall be provided for each additional 2,000 square feet or fraction thereof. [CCR Title 19, Division 1, §319(a)]
- All extinguishers shall have been purchased or serviced within the past 12-months. Proof of service shall be by certified tag, dated cash register receipt or manufacturer's date stamp on the fire extinguisher.
- Fire extinguisher gauge shall register in the operative range. Plastic indicator on the pull pin shall be in place.
- Each generator or generator area shall be provided with at least one fire extinguisher having a minimum rating of 2A:10BC. [CCR Title 19, Division 1, §319(b)]

## Electrical Power

- Electrical cooking appliances are allowed to be used inside of tents and booths.
- Extension cords shall be of a grounded type, and approved for exterior use, with no damage or splices.
- Trip protection shall be provided over cords. Large diameter cords must be provided with cord bridges or ramps to facilitate the crossing of wheel chairs, strollers, and similar wheeled equipment.

## **PALO ALTO FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU - OUTDOOR ASSEMBLY EVENTS**

- No cords shall be subject to vehicle traffic.
- Temporary power cords shall not be affixed to structures, extended through walls, or subject to environmental or physical damage.

### **Generators**

- Generators shall not be located within 20 ft. of a booth or tent, or within 10 feet of rides
- Generators shall be separated from contact with the public by physical guards, fencing or an enclosure.
- Refueling shall not be conducted during event hours.
- Extra fuel shall not be stored in vendor booths during event hours.
- Smoking and open flames shall be prohibited within 25 feet of refueling operations.
- Each generator or generator area shall be provided with at least one fire extinguisher having a minimum rating of 2A:10BC located within 25 feet, but not closer than 10 feet, of the generator. [CCR Title 19, Division 1, §319(b)]

### **Stages & Public Seating**

#### **Located Inside Tents:**

- Shall have at least two exits 48" wide.
- Tents with interior seating shall have:
  - a main aisle 48" wide extending to each exit
  - two (2) feet of separation between rows of chairs
- Hay bales prohibited inside.
- All stage decorations shall be fire-retardant treated.
- Emergency lighting and exit signage shall be provided if used after dark.
- Only electric heaters are allowed inside tents. All other fuel sources for heating must be outside the tent.
- LP-gas used for heating must be located at least 10 feet away from the tent and required exit(s).
- A minimum 2A:10BC fire extinguisher shall be located within 75 feet of travel distance from a stage.

### **Crowd Managers**

- Events where attendance is anticipated to exceed 1,000 trained crowd managers are required to least at least one crowd manager for every 250 persons anticipated. (CFC Sec. 403.3)
- Approved training can be obtained online through any of the following website: crowdmanagers.com

### **Fire Safety Tips**

- Know where fire extinguishers are and how to use them.
- Do not leave cooking unattended.
- Do not wear loose-fitting clothing while cooking.
- Remove trash accumulation regularly.

- Keep combustible materials away from heat sources.
- In case of an emergency, dial 9-1-1.

## **Food Trucks**

Mobile Food Facilities (Food Trucks) operating within Santa Clara County shall comply with the requirements of this standard. The Santa Clara County Department of Environmental Health (SCDEH), Consumer Protection Division provides direction and oversight on the annual permitting process for these facilities. **Mobile Food Facilities that are inspected and found not in compliance with the requirements of this standard may not be allowed to continue operating at the Special Event.**

Food Trucks participating in a permitted Special Event (Festival, Carnival, Street Fair, Farmers Market, etc.) within Santa Clara County shall have a current SCDEH annual permit, and be compliant with the following regulations:

- California Fire Code 2019 Edition (CFC)
- California Code of Regulations, Title 19 (CCR)
- California Mechanical Code 2019 Edition (CMC)
- California Health and Safety Code (H&S)

H&S §113789

"Food facility" includes permanent and nonpermanent food operations (commissaries and mobile facilities) that store, prepare, package, serve, vend, or otherwise provide food for human consumption, on or off the premises, at the retail level.

CFC §904.11

The Office of the State Fire Marshal amended this code section to clarify the application of Underwriters Laboratories Standard 300 (UL 300). These regulations became effective January 1, 2008.

- All automatic fire extinguishing systems used for the protection of commercial cooking operations that produce grease laden vapors shall comply with UL 300. All existing dry and wet chemical fire extinguishing systems installed for the protection of those operations shall comply with the UL 300 Standard.

CFC §904.11.6.2

- Automatic fire extinguishing systems shall be serviced at least every 6 months and after activation of the system. Inspection shall be by qualified individuals, and a certificate of inspection shall be forwarded to the fire code official upon completion.

CCR, Division 1, §573(a)

- Fire extinguishers with a Class K rating shall be provided for hazards where there is a potential for fires involving combustible cooking media (vegetable or animal oils and fats).

CMC §513.2.2

- Commercial cooking equipment that produces grease laden vapors shall be provided with a Type I Hood (a kitchen hood for collecting and removing grease and smoke), in accordance with this code,

## PALO ALTO FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU - OUTDOOR ASSEMBLY EVENTS

and equipped with an automatic fire extinguishing system that is listed and labeled in accordance with the following:

Wet chemical extinguishing system, (NFPA 17A, Standard for Wet Chemical Extinguishing Systems), complying with UL 300, Fire Testing of Fire Extinguishing Systems for the Protection of Restaurant Cooking Equipment.

### ELECTRICAL POWER

- Generators shall be placed in locations approved by the authority having jurisdiction for Outdoor Special Events use. Generator placement shall be a minimum of 20 feet away from tents and canopies and their locations shall be inaccessible to the public and cordoned off with caution tape.
- Each generator shall have a minimum 40B:C rated fire extinguisher near its location and accessible for use.
- Food trucks with pre-plumbed (inboard) gasoline generators are allowed to operate provided they are compliant with the California Mechanical and Electrical Codes.
- Under no circumstances shall gasoline be stored in Food Trucks or on site. Refueling of approved generators is prohibited during event hours. During approved refueling times, no smoking or open flames shall be within 25 feet of refueling operations.
- Extension cords and cables shall be of a grounded type and approved for outdoor use. Extension cords shall not be frayed, worn, or in pedestrian traffic areas unless they are secured. Cables shall be provided with cable ramps.
- All electrical power shall be in locations free from potential water intrusion and not located near gutters or storm drains.
- Fuel line fittings shall be visually checked for leaks before any generator is operated.

### LIQUEFIED PETROLEUM GAS (LP-Gas)

- LP-gas cylinders shall be secured in the upright position.
- LP-gas cylinders shall not be stored in the food truck.
- LP-gas cylinders, piping, valves and fittings located outside the food truck shall be adequately protected to prevent tampering, damage by vehicles or other hazards.
- LP-gas piping, valves and fittings shall be leak tested prior to use. (See attachment)

### ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- A minimum of 5 feet separation shall be maintained between individual food trucks.
- Food trucks shall have at least one 2A:10B:C fire extinguisher serviced within the last 12 months and accessible within the vehicle at all times.

## Checking for LPG Gas Leaks

### Guidance on Leak Testing and Maintaining Propane Cylinders

**\*Never check for leaks with an open flame\***

The owner/operator should leak test all the fittings that run from the propane tank to the appliance prior to operating appliances.

To perform a leak test:



## **PALO ALTO FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU - OUTDOOR ASSEMBLY EVENTS**

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- Prepare a solution of dishwashing detergent and water (one cup of water with a tablespoon of detergent) and place it in a clean spray bottle.
- With the appliance connected to the propane cylinder (make sure the appliance is turned off), turn on the propane tank cylinder valve.
- Spray the soapy solution generously over all hose connections and fittings, and all over the hose.
- If bubbles appear and become larger or more numerous - you have a leak.

If you discover a leak:

- Turn off the propane cylinder valve and replace the hose and fitting or have them checked and repaired by a qualified service technician.
- On many gas appliance, the nozzle type fitting on the hose which is threaded into the propane cylinder, has a rubber "O" ring on the end. If you have this type of "O" ring connection, check that ring every time you connect the hose fitting to a propane cylinder, and replace the "O" ring if it appears cracked, torn or is losing its shape.

General LPG Safety Precautions:

- Do not smoke while handling the propane cylinder.
- Never store or use a propane cylinder in your home or any other enclosed space, such as a garage, basement, or shed.
- Always use, transport, and store cylinders in an upright, vertical position with the cylinder valve turned off.
- Store cylinders outdoors away from sources of ignition and in a place where they will not be exposed to high temperatures.
- Make sure to read all warning labels attached to the cylinder.
- Make sure your propane cylinder is equipped with an OPD valve. The unique triangular shape of the valve's hand wheel and the letters "OPD" can identify OPD cylinders. Cylinders with a round or star-shaped hand wheel are obsolete and should not be used.
- In the United States, any cylinder over 12 years old must be re-certified before it can be filled. Have your propane cylinder filled by a trained, certified propane professional.