



Office of Louisiana State Fire Marshal
Code Enforcement and Building Safety

Department of Public Safety and Corrections
Public Safety Services



H. BUTCH BROWNING
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

INTERPRETIVE MEMORANDUM 2014 – 06

To: OSFM Industry Partners
OSFM Staff

From: Joe Delaune, Chief Architect/Plan Review, OSFM

Approved by: Chief Butch Browning, State Fire Marshal

Date: October 8, 2014

RE: **“Halloween Haunted Houses” - Fire Code and Accessibility Requirements**

The State of Louisiana has adopted the NFPA 101 “Life Safety Code” published by the National Fire Protection Association. This code contains provisions for **“Special Amusement Buildings,”** which include **“Haunted Houses”**. The State has also adopted the 2010 ADA-ABA Accessibility Guidelines, which require accessibility to be provided for all occupiable structures.

These codes require minimum fire protection, life safety, and accessibility features to be provided for **PERMANENT** “haunted house” or “special amusement” displays. All proposed permanent structures shall be submitted to this office for a full plan review prior to construction, please visit our website at LASFM.org for plan submittal requirements. The following features are, in summary, the primary fire safety and accessibility requirements that are applicable to **PERMANENT** “haunted house” or “special amusement” displays:

1. Protection throughout by an approved, supervised, automatic sprinkler system... where the building is movable or portable, sprinkler water supply may be by approved temporary means.

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2. Where the nature of the special amusement building is such that it operates in reduced lighting levels, the building shall be protected by an approved automatic smoke detection system, which upon activation shall sound an alarm at a constantly attended location.
3. Actuation of the sprinkler system or smoke detection system shall automatically increase the illumination in the means of egress, and shall stop conflicting or confusing sounds and visual effects.
4. In addition to normal exit markings, low level exit signs shall also be provided. In mobile buildings, exit signs shall be of luminescent, self-luminous, or electroluminescent type.
5. Where mazes, mirrors, or other designs are used to confound the egress path, approved directional exit marking that will become apparent in an emergency shall be provided.
6. Interior finish shall be Class A and all decorations shall be flame resistant.
7. Accessible parking, an accessible route, and features of accessibility for all permanent structures.

Meeting all the above requirements could make the custom of Halloween Haunted Houses cost-prohibitive in most cases. Therefore, the Office of the State Fire Marshal will allow the following variances to these requirements for TEMPORARY "Special Amusement Buildings" and so called "Ghost Walks". For the purposes of this document, "TEMPORARY" is defined as NOT MORE THAN 30 DAYS.

1. Interior finish in the building or structure shall be **Class A**, and all decorations and props shall be fire resistant.
2. Where low lighting levels are used, a **smoke detection system** shall be provided that will:
 - a. Sound an alarm that is audible above the greatest ambient noise level during the festivities;
 - b. The smoke detection systems shall sound at a **constantly manned location**, where the attendant will be capable of switching on additional lighting for emergency evacuation
(Note: This requirement will not apply to outdoor attractions, in areas that are considered to be "smoke protected", or where it is determined by the State Fire Marshal that the function of the smoke detectors will be impeded)
3. A method shall be provided to control the **occupant load within any structure to no more than 25** occupants at any one time.
4. A fire department engine or mini-pumper and personnel shall be provided on the scene during all periods of activity.*

*Due to the difficulties associated with having fire department personnel and equipment on scene at all times, the following alternative will be allowed:

- a. **ABC type portable fire extinguishers** must be placed in each room or area with a person trained in the proper use of extinguishers at each extinguisher location in the facility, **AND**
- b. **A garden hose that is tied into an adequate water supply** source and that is long enough to reach into each room or area of the haunted house must be provided.

5. **Exit and directional signs** shall be provided as necessary to make the egress path obvious.
6. Artificial smoke is **PROHIBITED** as it will cause problems with the proper functioning of the smoke detection system. (Note: **DRY ICE** may be used to produce smoke effects, as this will not interfere with the proper functioning of the smoke detection system.)
7. Accessible parking and an accessible route to the entrance of the attraction. Accessible routes shall have stable, firm and slip resistant walking surfaces.
8. A sketch of the building or facility, along with documentation on materials, emergency plans and equipment that will be used in the Halloween festivities and/or haunted house **must be submitted** to the nearest district office of the State Fire Marshal for review and approval prior to the use of buildings or spaces for temporary "Special Amusement" activities.

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