



## Village of Los Lunas Fire Marshal's Office

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## BASIC GUIDELINES FOR THE INSPECTION OF PUBLIC OCCUPANCES:

When inspecting Public Occupancy, an inspector should be seen by the owner of the facility as us providing a service to them by conducting a fire & life safety inspection. Inspectors should always meet with the manager or owner of the establishment before beginning the inspection process and should encourage him or her to accompany them during the inspection.

The following elements provide an outline of the most basic requirements and criteria as found in NFPA 1 Fire Prevention Code & NFPA Life Safety Code 101, 97 Edition. The order in which they are presented in is indicative of how they lessen a life threatening condition.

- IGNITION SOURCES**
  - 1. Pyrotechnics- Safe use of pyrotechnic displays indoors & out (RE: NFPA 1126)
  - 2. Open Flame- Controls for the safe use of open flame devices, including cooking & heating equipment.
  - 3. Cooking Facilities- Controls for any fire on cooking surfaces, including portable cooking equipment.
- INTERIOR FINISH, FURNISHINGS & CONTENTS**
  - 1. The purpose of interior finish requirements is to slow the flame spread across these surfaces to allow additional time for occupants to relocate or evacuate the building.
  - 2. Fire Testing- For purpose of evaluating flame spread and smoke development characteristics.
  - 3. Interior Finish- Exposed surfaces of walls, ceilings, and floors within buildings.
  - 4. Decorations & Panels- Hanging or mounting of these materials, even on a temporary basis, can introduce a source of combustible fuels. Proper treatment and use of these materials is crucial.
- OCCUPANT LOAD**
  - 1. The Occupant Load is defined as "The total number of persons that might occupy a building or a portion thereof at any one time". In addition, an occupant load is also takes into account as the number of people anticipated to be in the facility and are a part if the criteria, such as the number of exits and the width of the exits. REF: NFPA Life Safety Code 101, Chapter #3 Section 3-2
  - 2. The intended use of the facility and the number of exits in excess of the minimum number required will influence the maximum allowable occupants load. The total number of occupants who may occupy a facility at any given time, the requirements are listed in Chapter #8, Section 8-1.7 "New Assembly Occupancies" & Chapter #9, Section 9-1.7.
  - 3. Established occupant loads should be posted prominently to ensure that not only the owner, but also the manager, operator, and occupants, are aware of the limitations.

### CALCULATION OF OCCUPANT LOAD:

- a. Assembly area with concentrated use without fixed seating: Auditorium, Dance Floor, Discotheque, or Lodge Hall= One (1) person per 7 net sq. ft.
- b. Assembly area with less concentrated use: Conference room, Dining room, Drinking establishment, Exhibit room, Gymnasium, Lounge= One (1) person per 15 net sq. ft.
- c. Bleachers, Pews, and similar bench-type seating: One (1) person per 18 linear in:  
NOTE: Required aisle space serving the fixed seats shall not be used to increase the occupant load.
- d. Kitchens=One (1) person per 100 gross sq. ft.
- e. Libraries= in stacked areas= One (1) person per 100 gross sq. ft. In Reading rooms= One (1) person per 50 net sq. ft.

- f. Swimming Pools= One (1) person per 50 gross sq. ft. Pool decks= One (1) person per 30 gross sq. ft.
- g. Stages= One (1) person per 15 net sq. ft.
- h. Waiting areas= One (1) person per 3 sq. ft.
- i. NOTE: The occupant load permitted in a building or portion thereof shall be permitted to be increased, if the necessary aisles and exits are provided. To increase the occupant load, a diagram indicating placement of equipment, aisles, exits, and seating shall be provided to and approved by the "Authority Having Jurisdiction" prior to any increase in the occupant load. In areas not greater than 10,000 sq. ft.; the occupant load shall not exceed one (1) person in 5 sq. ft. In an area greater than 10,000 sq. ft. the occupant load shall not exceed one (1) person in 7 sq. ft.

FORMULA: (Length X Width= Square feet)

(Square feet x Occupant rate= Occupant Load)

NOTE: Deductions of total square footage is required for any spaces that cannot be occupied: EX: Chairs, Tables, Furniture, Cabinets & other obstructions.

## MEANS OF EGRESS

1. Exiting is the most critical element of all requirements for any public occupancy. While the probability if a fire in a public occupancy might be low, the potential for the loss of life once a fire or an emergency occurs is extremely high. A fire or emergency of any magnitude can easily result in a large number of injuries or deaths. Therefore it is a requirement that public occupancies have sufficient means of egress to accommodate the number of people likely to occupy the space and that the means of egress be maintained, identified, illuminated and easily accessible. In addition to the egress requirements, all exit lights and directional exit signs, should be illuminated in both the normal and emergency modes.
2. The number and arrangement of exits
  - a. As a minimum, two (2) exits are required in each facility that are remotely located from each other. Additional exits are required based on the total occupant load and the use of the facility. There are circumstances where only one exit will suffice.
3. The main entrance/exit must be of sufficient width and size to accommodate half of the rated occupant load of the facility in assembly type occupancies.
4. The exit access, the exit and the exit discharge must always be free and clear of any obstructions.
5. All exit doors must open easily and if panic hardware is installed. There shall be no more than 15lbs of force needed to activate the exit doors.
6. All means of egress and any egress routes shall be of sufficient width to accommodate the number of occupants that may be egressing the facility at any given time.

## FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS

1. On-site or built-in fire protection equipment includes portable fire extinguishers, interior standpipes, automatic sprinkler systems, Special fire protection systems and fire alarm systems. During the inspection process the review of the general condition of the fire protection systems should be evaluated. In the event of a non-functioning or lack of adequate fire protection in an existing facility. The use & occupancy of the facility may be questionable, based on the lack of adequate fire protection systems.
2. The Codes and Standards applicable to the installation, maintenance & testing of installed fire protection systems is referenced in NFPA 1 Fire Prevention Code.
3. The owner, operator or the occupant is responsible for the compliance to the referenced codes for the maintenance, testing and installation of any fire protection systems.
4. Fire extinguishers ARE required in all public buildings/businesses. Fire extinguishers must be serviced annually by a licensed professional in accordance with NFPA 10.

## BUILDING SERVICE

1. The inherent sources of ignition in public occupancies also include HVAC systems, refrigeration systems, electrical systems, natural/LPG gas service, electrical appliances and other conditions that may be encountered in cooking areas.
2. All building services, equipment and systems shall be inspected, tested, and maintained by qualified service personnel.

**SPECIAL AMUSEMENT OR TEMPORARY FACILITIES**

1. Special amusement or temporary buildings present another life safety problem that needs to be addressed based on the location, use, occupants and the construction materials used for the facility.
2. Means of egress is the most critical elements concerning this type of public occupancy, since little or no fire/smoke barrier separation exists.
3. In certain types of Special Amusement or Temporary Facilities, certain type of fire protection systems may be required to provide a level of life safety for the occupants.
4. Candles and open flame devices are not allowed in any type of Special Amusement or Temporary facilities without the express written authorization of the "Authority Having Jurisdiction" and additional safeguards and devices are in place.
5. Special Amusement or Temporary Facilities must receive a fire inspection by this office prior to allowing the facility to be occupied.

**LIFE SAFETY EVALUATION**

A life safety evaluation is an added requirement for public occupancies having an occupant load in excess of 1000 occupants. The life safety evaluation is an assessment of the following conditions:

1. Nature of events and the participants and attendees.
2. Access and egress movement, including crowd density requirements.
3. Medical emergencies
4. Fire hazards
5. Permanent and temporary structural systems.
6. Severe weather conditions.
7. Earthquakes
8. Civil or other disturbances.
9. Hazardous materials use, storage and processes near the public occupancy.
10. Relationship among the facility management, event participants, emergency response agencies, and others having a role in the events accommodated in the facility.

**INSPECTION REPORTS:**

1. Shall be maintained by the fire department conducting the inspections for a period of not less than 5 years.

**ASSISTANCE:**

1. The Los Lunas Fire Marshal's Office can provide assistance, however due to our limited resources, advanced notice is required; please call 505-866-2116 to schedule assistance.