

Walter E. Washington Convention Center Fire and Safety Guidelines

General fire and safety guidelines

Smoking

The Washington Convention Center is a non-smoking facility. Smoking is not permitted in any interior areas of the building. We thank you for your cooperation in enforcing this policy.

Fire Fighting and Emergency Equipment

Fire fighting and emergency equipment may not be blocked or obstructed under any circumstances. All fire hose connections, extinguisher cabinets, and fire alarm call stations must be visible at all times. Exhibit booths may not block access to fire fighting equipment.

Exits

For your safety, exit doors may not be obstructed. Exit doors may not be locked, blocked or held open, except by an approved smoke detection closing device. 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.

Aisles

Aisles in exhibit halls must be at least ten (10) feet wide.

Propane

Propane tanks may not be stored inside the center.

Crate storage

Empty crate storage is permitted only with prior approval and within specific guidelines.

Booth Guidelines

Exhibit booth construction and decorations

Exhibit booths shall be constructed of noncombustible or limited combustible materials. Wood shall be greater than ¼ inch nominal thickness, or wood not greater than ¼ thickness shall be treated with fire retardant meeting the requirements of National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standard 703. Other combustible materials must be flame resistant in accordance with NFPA 701 for textiles and films, and Underwriters Laboratories (U.L.) 1975 for foamed plastics.

Multi-story exhibit booths

Exhibit booths that are multi-story or contain covered exhibit areas, such as conference areas or theatres, must be approved in advance and meet minimum life safety requirements. Please consult your Event Manager for further information.

Electrical equipment

Electrical equipment must be listed equipment (U.L., F.M., etc.). Electrical wiring must be in accordance with the National Electrical Code. 14 gauge wire or better is required for all connections. All extension cords must be 3 wire grounded.

Only WCCA staff is authorized to move WCCA electrical equipment. Utility panels and mechanical equipment rooms may not be blocked under any circumstances.

Cooking in exhibit booths

Exhibitor cooking is approved in advance, on a case-by-case basis by WCCA and the D.C. Fire Prevention Division. Please note the following:

- Devices producing open flames, such as sterno, 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 WCCA and the D.C. Fire Prevention Division.
- After review, the D.C. 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 D.C. Fire Marshall may require a test of cooking equipment before show opening.

Please consult your Event Manager for further information and to request Cooking Request Forms.

Open flame

Open flame devices and candles are not permitted in exhibit booths.

Compressed gases/flammable liquids/aerosols

The use, display or storage 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.

Hazardous materials

Certain waste products are classified as hazardous waste, and may only be used, handled, stored and disposed of in accordance with OSHA and EPA material handling guidelines. These products include paint, ink, certain chemicals, particularly petroleum-based and ketone-based, and certain medical supplies.

Special handling is required for the proper disposal of hazardous material or substances, and must be coordinated with the Center. No one may bring such material into the Center without prior written approval from the WCCA.

Hazardous chemicals

Hazardous chemicals, including pool chemicals, pesticides and herbicides are prohibited without prior written approval.

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.