

Special Events Permit Process

CODE REFERENCE: California Fire Code (CFC) Chapter 31

General Information

A special events permit is required from the Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) for the following:

- Temporary structures (Stages/truss, canopies, bleachers, fencing, etc.)
- Inflatables
- Chairs in rows/aisle for 200+ people
- Multiple tables/chairs for Dining
- Temporary power
- Cooking with open flame
- Events with large attendance that may pose any fire safety risk.

"Temporary" is considered less than 6 months. OSFM regulates structure location and access, anchorage of canopies/tents or inflatables, egress plan, heat producing equipment, and hazardous materials/operations. It is essential to submit the application well in advance, as approval can take 1-2 weeks.

Facilities Management & Development (FMD) will help expedite the permit approval process; upload to GovMotus, the Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) Permit Platform; and schedule an on-site inspection with OSFM and the applicant.

WHEN IS A PERMIT REQUIRED?

1. A permit is needed for any organized activity that goes beyond a typical day's use of public space, involves a significant number of people, impacts public property, or requires specific services.
2. Tents (or groupings of tents less than 12 feet apart from each other) in excess of 400 sf (or 700 sf if open on all sides) require a permit. [\[CFC 3103.2 or 3103.5\]](#)
3. Large outdoor assembly events, which are not limited to those events with tents or other membrane structures, but are regulated due to the number of people, density of those people and hazards associated with large outdoor events related to egress, fire hazards from cooking and other related concerns.

SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT PROCESS:

Applications are required 30 days prior to the event to FMD. San Luis Obispo County Fire requires applicants to obtain an operational permit prior to the event. The applicant is responsible for submitting plans which include:

- Submit a completed [application form](#).
- Fill out an [Event Request Form](#)
- Create a site plan layout that accurately indicates the distances from the tent or canopy to buildings, access drives, other tents or canopies, cooking and heating appliances, property lines, and roadways.
- Flame retardant certificate(s) for tent/canopy material. ([CFC 3104.3](#)) The regulations of the State Fire Marshal for large and small tents, awnings, inflatables, and other fabric enclosures shall also apply.
- Submit manufacturer's specifications for anchoring or provide calculations and anchorage details.
- Identify proposed occupant load and means of egress.
- Electrical equipment and wiring
- Portable fire extinguisher locations
- Cooking appliance uses and protection.
- Public Safety plan ([CFC 403.11.2](#))

Please send all documents to facilities-events@calpoly.edu

Final site inspection by the OSFM will be required after all requirements are in place. [\[CFC 3103.7\]](#). SFM requires 10 days' notice for final inspections. An OSFM inspection ensures all temporary structures and safety measures meet the California Fire Code. The inspection verifies unobstructed emergency access, clear exit path(s), flame resistance of tents, cooking areas, and proper placement of fire safety equipment. A successful inspection confirms compliance, allowing the event to proceed, while failure to meet standards can result in the event's closure.

The California OSFM's "[Special events and fairs tri-fold](#)" outlines a checklist for fire safety requirements in several key areas to ensure the safety of events on campus.

Depending on the scale of the event, hiring a structural engineer or architect may be required to inspect any truss/stages.

SFM inspection rate is \$250/hr (A well-prepared submittal and setup can help minimize inspection time). Reviews and inspections will vary, and the sponsoring department will be charged when SFM invoices are received.

For consultation, please send an email to facilities-events@calpoly.edu. When the application is complete, a meeting will be scheduled with SFM for review and approval. Attendance of the applicant will be required.

SITE PLAN CHECKLIST

1. Provide a map showing the overall placement of the project on campus.
2. Provide a detailed site plan with the following information.
 - Show fire access: maintain and show a 20' wide fire and distance to the event area or tent.
 - Show any fire hydrants distance to the structure or tent.
 - Denote the distance from the tent/site to any adjacent existing buildings, combustibles or structures. Code requires a minimum of 20' for any structure. [CFC 3103.8.2]
 - A note that all tents will be labeled as Title 19 certified or fire resistant so that it can be inspected upon erection. [CFC 3104.3]
 - Denote if tent will be open air, or if it will have sides. This may affect need for lights and exits.
 - Denote how tent will be anchored to address wind loads.
 - Documentation of structural stability will be required by SFM, usually for large and hazardous setups. [3103.9]
 - Show all dimensions of all tents or setup, any fence and note any exits, and width of exits.
 - Note the use of space and maximum occupants will be used at one time.
 - Show maximum occupants sign and exit signs.
 - Denote any fuel (heaters or generators) or gas appliances and ensure you have 20' separation from all tents.
 - If using portable heaters, note no extension cords will be used.
 - Note any other items or unique characteristics to your event.

CAMPUS SITE PLAN

SAMPLE PERMIT PLAN - (This is a sample please do not reference for document submittal)

TEMPORARY TENTS, CANOPIES OR STRUCTURES

TENTS NOT LARGER THAN 400SF

- Submit site plan illustrating tent location, tent dimensions, and adjacent construction within 20'. Identify whether the tent is located on soil, asphalt, concrete or other.
- Fire-retardant-treated fabric, OSFM approved (with good structural properties)
- Tent anchorage per Manufacturers (Stakes or Rods not allowed on campus lawns)

TENTS LARGER THAN 400SF

- Site plan illustrating tent location w/ dimensions & adjacent construction within 20'
- Identify on soil, asphalt, concrete or other (paved surface preferable)
- **Fire-retardant-treated fabric, OSFM approved** (with good structural properties)
- Structural Due Diligence:
 - OSFM does not require structural analysis for GovMotus submittal, however, it's conditional:
 - **OSFM requires documentation of structural stability to be furnished upon request.**
 - All agencies and vendors can provide this information upon request.

SUBMITTING WORK ORDERS IN PLANON:

- **Please put in a work order through Planon** and click on the Event Support tile
- Be sure to include when the event is scheduled (**we need at least three weeks for anything that requires an Office of State Fire Marshal permit**)
- Please include any drawings of any floor plans, stages, and setups to assist the work order process.
- Copy and paste this into the "Detailed Description" box in Planon and fill in your event information - please put ALL requests for your event into this one submission:

Event:

Location:

Date(s):

Start/End Time(s):

Request(s):

- **(If requesting a spider box or power support, you must include a map/event layout and indicate EXACTLY where you need power set up)**
- These service requests are all chargebacks to your club/college/organization, so you will need to use a Chart Field String (CFS) for payment. If you are a club and do not know your CFS, please email ASI Club Services for assistance -OR- if your organization banks off campus, please email us at facilities-events@calpoly.edu for further instructions.
- Please note that if your event requires a permit and inspection with the Office of the State Fire Marshal, additional charges may accrue.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:

1. [SFM Special Events & Fairs checklist](#)
2. [SFM Energized Equipment Informational Guide](#)
3. [SFM Temporary Structure and Outdoor Events](#)

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT:

- [Labor Rates & Chargeback information](#)
- [Cal Poly contracted vendors/Rentals](#)
- [Environmental Health & Safety/ Food Safety Permit](#)
- [Event Request Form](#)