

Fire Safety Guidelines for Exhibition & Show Fire Guards

FIRE SAFETY AT CONVENTIONS AND EXHIBITIONS

Each year thousands of visitors attend trade shows, conventions, exhibitions, and similar functions in the City of Chicago. To protect the public and the millions of dollars of displays, the Municipal Code of Chicago makes extensive requirements for fire safety in those facilities which host such shows. Included in these is the requirement for fire guards.

It is a requirement of Chapter 15-4 of the Municipal Code that the promoters or managers of a convention, exhibition, trade show, or similar function provide special fire guards at their own expense. Fire guards are to be provided on the basis of the following:

1. One fire guard for each 25,000 square feet of exhibition area, including storage space, when the show is open for business.
2. One fire guard for each 50,000 square feet of space during hours when the show is not open to the public.
3. The Fire Department is empowered to require additional fire guards if the number of the floor levels or the anticipated attendance make them necessary.

The fire guards are required to have suitable uniforms and identifying badges. They are also required to be provided by the show manager with watchman's tour clocks and to make hourly rounds of the show area and associated storage areas.

THE FIRE GUARD LICENSE

To fulfill the requirements of the Municipal Code, fire guards must be licensed by the Bureau of Fire Prevention. To receive a license as a fire guard a person must:

- A. Be of legal age (18 years), have temperate habits, and be mentally competent.
- B. Not have been convicted of a felony.
- C. Be able to speak and understand the English language.
- D. Produce evidence of employment and residence for the two previous years.
- E. Pass a written examination pertaining to the duties of a fire guard administered by the Fire Prevention Bureau.
- F. Not have had a fire guard license previously revoked.

Application for Fire Guard can be received by calling the Fire Prevention Bureau at 312-744-4762. A fee of \$40.00 is charged. The Fire Prevention Bureau is authorized to suspend or revoke fire guard licenses if a fire guard does not perform the required duties. Licenses are valid for one year from the date issued. The Fire Guard's certificate is required to be carried at all times while on duty.

DUTIES OF THE FIRE GUARD

The Municipal Code of Chicago charges a fire guard with specific duties and responsibilities. The most important duty of fire guard is to call the Fire Department (9-1-1) and to begin an orderly evacuation of the show patrons in the event of fire. The Fire Department must be called at the first indication or report of a fire. Any indication or report of a possible fire, such as smoke, should be treated as an actual fire. A fire guard should NOT ATTEMPT to verify or fight a fire before calling the Fire Department. When calling the Fire Department, the fire guard should state the address of the building and the floor on which the fire has been reported.

A fire guard is required to tour the show area and associated storage areas on an hourly basis with a watchman's clock provided by the show manager. The locations of the key stations for the watchman's clock are specified by the Bureau of Fire Prevention. The fire guards are required to make rounds during the periods when the show is being set up or dismantled.

Fire guards are further required by law to see that all exit doors are unlocked and unobstructed, and that the aisles, corridors, and other means of egress are clear and free of obstructions. A fire guard is also required to keep standpipes and hose connections, fire extinguishers and other fire equipment identified, unobstructed and in working order. Combustible packing materials are not permitted to be stored behind or between exhibit booths or behind draperies.