
STANDATA interpretation 23-BCI-010/23-FCI-013

Building/Fire

Special events

Date Issued: January 2025

Page 1 of 15

Purpose

This identifies the Safety Code requirements and enforcement for indoor and outdoor special events.

Discussion

Safety Codes Officers (SCO), owners, facilitators, coordinators, promoters, vendors and other Ministries have asked Municipal Affairs for guidance on the requirements and enforcement of permits and occupant loads for indoor and outdoor special events.

Some municipalities have a special event (indoor or outdoor) process that would see the applicant engage with multiple levels of both municipal and government departments. Part of the engagement may be with building and/or fire safety codes officers for the issuance of permit(s), an occupant load and approval of emergency plan(s) or a site plan(s). The process and processing of special events, both indoor and outdoor special events, are at the discretion of the Municipality in which the event is occurring. Individuals planning a special event should inquire with the Municipality on requirements and the process involved.

The *Safety Codes Act*, the National Building Code – 2023 Alberta Edition (NBC(AE)) and National Fire Code – 2023 Alberta Edition (NFC(AE)) have provisions that provide guidance on the issuance and enforcement of occupant load(s) and emergency plan(s) if one is required.

This document provides guidance on the minimum safety codes standards and requirements necessary to establish an acceptable level of life safety during any type of special event.

It is important to note there are other regulatory bodies with minimum standards which must be met. This STANDATA does not apply to those other regulatory bodies and their levels of enforcement however, the assumption is all parties involved with the special event will work together to achieve compliance with all municipal bylaws and provincial regulations.

Code References

Safety Codes Act

Interpretation

1(1) In this Act,

(e) “Administrator” means an Administrator appointed under this Act

(v) “owner” includes a lessee, a person in charge, a person who has care and control and a person who holds out that the person has the powers and authority of ownership or who for the time being exercises the powers of authority of ownership.

Application of this Act

2(1) This Act applies to fire protection, barrier-free design and the design, manufacture, construction, installation, use, operation, occupancy and maintenance of

- (a) buildings,
- (b) electrical systems,
- (c) elevating devices,
- (d) gas systems,
- (e) plumbing systems,
- (f) pressure equipment, and
- (g) private sewage disposal systems.

Responsibilities

Owners, care and control

5 The owner of any thing, process or activity to which this Act applies shall ensure that it meets the requirements of this Act, that the thing is maintained as required by the regulations and that when the process or activity is undertaken it is done in a safe manner.

Permits required

43(1) If this Act requires a person to have a permit to sell, construct, control or operate any thing or supervise, operate or undertake any process or activity, no person shall do so unless the person has the appropriate permit.

National Fire Code – 2023 Alberta Edition and National Building Code – 2023 Alberta Edition

NBC(AE) Division A, Article 1.4.1.2.

1.4.1.2. Defined Terms

1) The words and terms in italics in this Code shall have the following meanings:

Access to exit means that part of a *means of egress* within a *floor area* that provides access to an *exit* serving the *floor area*.

Air-supported structure means a structure consisting of a pliable membrane that achieves and maintains its shape and support by internal air pressure.

Appliance means a device to convert fuel into energy and includes all components, controls, wiring and piping required to be part of the device by the applicable standard referred to in this Code.

Assembly occupancy (Group A) means the *occupancy* or the use of a *building* or part thereof by a gathering of persons for civic, political, travel, religious, social, educational, recreational or like purposes, or for the consumption of food or drink.

Authority having jurisdiction means a safety codes officer in the fire discipline exercising authority pursuant to designation of powers and terms of employment in accordance with the Safety Codes Act.

Building means any structure used or intended for supporting or sheltering any use or *occupancy*.

Closure means a device or assembly for closing an opening through a *fire separation* or an exterior wall, such as a door, a shutter, wired glass or glass block, and includes all components such as hardware, closing devices, frames and anchors.

Combustible construction means that type of construction that does not meet the requirements for *noncombustible construction* or *encapsulated mass timber construction*.

Combustible liquid means a liquid having a *flash point* at or above 37.8°C and below 93.3°C. (See Subsection 4.1.2. of Division B.)

Exit means that part of a *means of egress*, including doorways, that leads from the *floor area* it serves to a separate *building*, an open public thoroughfare, or an exterior open space protected from fire exposure from the *building* and having access to an open public thoroughfare. (See Note A-1.4.1.2.(1).)

Flammable liquid means a liquid having a *flash point* below 37.8°C and having a vapour pressure not more than 275.8 kPa (absolute) at 37.8°C as determined by ASTM D323, “Standard Test Method for Vapor Pressure of Petroleum Products (Reid Method).” (See Subsection 4.1.2. of Division B.)

Means of egress means a continuous path of travel provided for the escape of persons from any point in a *building* or contained open space to a separate *building*, an open public thoroughfare, or an exterior open space protected from fire exposure from the *building* and having access to an open public thoroughfare. *Means of egress* includes *exits* and *access to exits*.

Noncombustible construction means that type of construction in which a degree of fire safety is attained by the use of noncombustible materials for structural members and other building assemblies.

Occupancy means the use or intended use of a *building* or part thereof for the shelter or support of persons, animals or property.

Occupant load means the number of persons for which a *building* or part thereof is designed.

Permit means, for the purposes of this Code, permission in writing to commence the use, *occupancy*, relocation, construction or demolition of any *building*.

Public way means a sidewalk, *street*, highway, square or other open space to which the public has access, as of right or by invitation, expressed or implied.

Supervisory staff means those occupants of a *building* who have some delegated responsibility for the fire safety of other occupants under the fire safety plan.

National Building Code – 2023 Alberta Edition

NBC(AE) Division B, Subsection 3.1.2.

3.1.2. Classification of Buildings or Parts of Buildings by Major Occupancy (See Note A-3.1.2.)

3.1.2.1. Classification of Buildings

1) Except as permitted by Articles 3.1.2.3. to 3.1.2.5., every *building* or part thereof shall be classified according to its *major occupancy* as belonging to one of the Groups or Divisions described in Table 3.1.2.1. (See Note A-3.1.2.1. (1).)

2) A *building* intended for use by more than one *major occupancy* shall be classified according to all *major occupancies* for which it is used or intended to be used.

Table 3.1.2.1.

Major Occupancy Classification

Forming Part of Sentences 3.1.2.1.(1) and 3.1.2.2.(1)

Group	Division	Description of <i>Major Occupancies</i>
A	1	<i>Assembly occupancies</i> intended for the production and viewing of the performing arts
A	2	<i>Assembly occupancies</i> not elsewhere classified in Group A
A	3	

A	4	<i>Assembly occupancies</i> in which occupants are gathered in the open air
---	---	---

A-3.1.2.1. (1) Major Occupancy Classification. The following are examples of the major occupancy classifications described in Table 3.1.2.1.:

Group A, Division 2

- Art galleries
- Auditoria
- Bowling alleys
- Churches and similar places of worship
- Clubs, nonresidential
- Community halls
- Courtrooms
- Dance halls
- Exhibition halls (other than classified in Group E)
- Gymnasia
- Lecture halls
- Libraries
- Licensed beverage establishments
- Museums

Group A, Division 4

- Amusement park structures (not elsewhere classified)
- Bleachers
- Grandstands
- Reviewing stands
- Stadia

NBC(AE) Division B, Article 3.1.16.1.**3.1.16.1. Fabric Canopies and Marquees**

1) Fabrics used as part of an awning, canopy or marquee that is located within or attached to a *building* of any type of construction shall conform to CAN/ULC-S109, "Standard Method for Flame Tests of Flame-Resistant Fabrics and Films."

NBC(AE) Division B, Article 3.1.17.1.**3.1.17. Occupant Load****3.1.17.1. Occupant Load Determination**

- 1) The occupant load of a floor area or part of a floor area shall be based on
 - a) the number of seats in an assembly occupancy having fixed seats,
 - b) 2 persons per sleeping room in a dwelling unit, or
 - c) the number of persons for which the area is designed, but not less than that determined from Table 3.1.17.1. for occupancies other than those described in Clauses (a) and (b), unless it can be shown that the area will be occupied by fewer persons.
- 2) If a floor area or part thereof has been designed for an occupant load other than that determined from Table 3.1.17.1., a permanent sign indicating that occupant load shall be posted in a conspicuous location.
- 3) For the purposes of this Article, mezzanines, tiers and balconies shall be regarded as part of the floor area.

4) If a room or group of rooms is intended for different occupancies at different times, the value to be used from Table 3.1.17.1. shall be the value which gives the greatest number of persons for the occupancies concerned.

**Table 3.1.17.1.
Occupant Load**
Forming Part of Article
3.1.17.1.

Type of Use of <i>Floor Area</i> or Part Thereof	Area per person, m ²
Assembly uses	
space with fixed seats	(1)
space with non-fixed seats	0.75
stages for theatrical performances	0.75
space with non-fixed seats and tables	0.95
standing space	0.40
stadia and grandstands	0.60
bowling alleys, pool and billiard rooms	9.30
classrooms	1.85
school shops and vocational rooms	9.30
reading or writing rooms or lounges	1.85
dining, beverage and cafeteria space	1.20
laboratories in schools	4.60

NBC(AE) Division B, Subsection 3.1.18.

3.1.18. Tents and Air-Supported Structures

3.1.18.1. Means of Egress

1) Tents and *air-supported structures* shall conform to Sections 3.3. and 3.4.

3.1.18.2. Restrictions

- 1) An *air-supported structure* shall not be located above the *first storey* on any *building*.
- 2) An *air-supported structure* shall not be used for Groups B, C, or Group F, Division 1 *major occupancies* or for classrooms.
- 3) An *air-supported structure* shall be designed as open floor space without interior walls, *mezzanines*, intermediate floors or similar construction.

3.1.18.3. Clearance to Other Structures

- 1) Except as permitted by Sentences (2) to (4), every tent and *air-supported structure* shall conform to Subsection 3.2.3.
- 2) Tents and *air-supported structures*
 - a) shall not be erected closer than 3 m to other structures on the same property except as permitted by Sentences (3) and (4), and
 - b) shall be sufficiently distant from one another to provide an area to be used as a means of emergency egress.
- 3) Tents and *air-supported structures* not occupied by the public
 - a) need not be separated from one another, and
 - b) are permitted to be erected less than 3 m from other structures on the same property provided this spacing does not create a hazard to the public.

4) Tents not more than 120 m² in ground area, located on fair grounds or similar open spaces, need not be separated from one another provided this does not create a hazard to the public.

3.1.18.4. Clearance to Flammable Material

1) The ground enclosed by a tent or *air-supported structure* and not less than 3 m of ground outside the structure shall be cleared of all flammable material or vegetation that will spread fire.

3.1.18.5. Flame Resistance

1) Every tent and *air-supported structure* and all tarpaulins and decorative materials used in connection with these structures shall conform to CAN/ULC-S109, "Standard Method for Flame Tests of Flame-Resistant Fabrics and Films."

3.1.18.6. Emergency Air Supply

1) An *air-supported structure* used as a place of assembly for more than 200 persons shall have either

- a) an automatic emergency engine-generator set capable of powering one blower continuously for 4 h, or
- b) a supplementary blower powered by an automatic internal combustion engine.

3.1.18.7. Electrical Systems

1) The electrical system and equipment in a tent or *air-supported structure*, including electrical fuses and switches, shall be inaccessible to the public.

2) Cables on the ground in areas used by the public in a tent or *air-supported structure* shall be placed in trenches or protected by covers to prevent damage from traffic.

A-3.1.18. Tents and Air-Supported Structures. The requirements in this Subsection are intended to be limited to certain types of structure. For instance, the word "tent" as used in the Code is intended to refer to a temporary shelter which is used at an open air event such as a fair or an exhibition. A tent will normally be constructed of a fabric held up by poles and attached to the ground by ties. The requirements for tents, however, are not intended to be applied to fabric structures located on buildings.

The term "air-supported structure," as used in the Code, refers to an envelope which is held up by air pressure alone and which is erected on the ground or above a basement. The structure will usually require ballast or a positive ground anchorage system around the entire perimeter to secure it to the ground or basement.

To reinforce this intent, the Code prohibits the location of an air-supported structure above the first storey of any building.

The requirements of Subsection 3.1.18. are not intended to apply to air-supported roof assemblies on buildings, such as domed stadia, or to other types of air-supported structures, such as those over swimming pools situated on the roofs of buildings, which would not be anchored at or near ground level. These assemblies or structures are normally designed and evaluated on the basis of alternative solutions as permitted by Article 1.2.1.1. of Division A.

NBC (AE) Division B, Article 3.2.4.1.**3.2.4.1. Determination of Requirement for a Fire Alarm System**

4) Except as permitted by Sentences (5), (6) and 3.2.4.2.(4), a fire alarm system shall be installed in a *building* that is not *sprinklered* throughout and that contains

- a) a *contained use area*,
- b) an *impeded egress zone*,
- c) more than 3 *storeys*, including the *storeys* below the *first storey*,
- d) a total *occupant load* more than 300, other than in open air seating areas,
- e) an *occupant load* more than 150 above or below the *first storey*, other than in open air seating areas,
- f) a school, college, or child care facility, including a daycare facility, with an *occupant load* more than 40,
- g) a licensed beverage establishment or a licensed restaurant, with an *occupant load* more than 150,
- h) a *low-hazard industrial occupancy* with an *occupant load* more than 75 above or below the *first storey*,
- i) a *medium-hazard industrial occupancy* with an *occupant load* more than 75 above or below the *first storey*,
- j) a *residential occupancy* with sleeping accommodation for more than 10 persons,
- k) a *high-hazard industrial occupancy* with an *occupant load* more than 25, or
- l) an *occupant load* more than 300 below an open air seating area.

NBC(AE) Division B, Subsection 3.3.2.**3.3.2. Assembly Occupancy****3.3.2.1. Scope**

- 1) This Subsection applies to *assembly occupancies* and to outdoor places of assembly.
- 2) Except as required in Sentence (3), provisions 12.2.3.2, 12.2.3.3, 12.2.5.4, 12.2.5.5, 12.2.5.6, 12.2.11.1, 12.4.1 and 12.4.2 of Chapter 12 of NFPA 101, "Life Safety Code," are permitted to be used in lieu of Articles 3.3.2.4., 3.3.2.5., 3.3.2.9., 3.3.2.11. and 3.3.2.12.
(See Note A-3.3.2.1.(2).)
- 3) The minimum clear width of aisle accessways between rows of seats shall be calculated according to provisions 12.2.5.5.2, 12.2.5.5.4.1 and 12.2.5.5.5.1 of Chapter 12 of NFPA 101, "Life Safety Code," except that in no case shall the width be less than 400 mm.

A-3.3.2.1.(2) Use of NFPA 101. The intention of Sentence (2) is to allow Code users the option of using NFPA 101, "Life Safety Code," to address the following issues: means of egress; egress routes within assembly occupancies; aisles and access serving seating not at tables; guards and railings; life safety evaluation; and smoke-protected assembly seating. However, opting to use NFPA 101 under this application entails adherence to all the provisions listed in Sentence (2): it is not intended that Code users randomly select and apply a mix of provisions from both the NBC(AE) and the NFPA.

NBC(AE) Division C, Subsection 2.2.11.**2.2.11.1. Occupancy****2.2.11.2. Tents and Air-Supported Structures**

- 1) A tent or *air-supported structure* shall not be erected unless written permission has been obtained from the *authority having jurisdiction*.
- 2) The *authority having jurisdiction* may place terms and conditions on the permission to erect a tent or *air-supported structure* referred to in Sentence (1).

2.2.11.3. Temporary Use

[Building STANDATA | Alberta.ca](#)

[Fire STANDATA | Alberta.ca](#)

- 1) Except for *buildings* constructed under Part 10 of Division B, the *authority having jurisdiction* may permit the temporary *occupancy* of a *building*. (See Note A-2.2.11.3. (1).)
- 2) The *authority having jurisdiction* may permit selective compliance with this Code for a temporary *building* referred to in Sentence (1).
- 3) A *building* referred to in Sentence (1) shall have the following information posted at the principal entrance to the *building*:
 - a) the time limitations imposed under Sentence (1),
 - b) any conditions of selective compliance imposed under Sentence (2), and
 - c) the *permit*.

A-2.2.11.3. (1) Temporary Use. An authority having jurisdiction has the discretionary power to allow the temporary use or occupancy of a building even though the building may not comply entirely with all requirements of the NBC(AE). Exceptions to compliance with all requirements are permitted in cases where buildings are intended for use and/or occupancy for short periods of time. This reasonable approach allows tents and air-supported structures to be erected and occupied at carnivals, circuses, sideshows, auctions, religious outdoor events, etc. It also allows for more permanent structures, although still temporary in nature, to be used as school rooms, trailers on car dealer lots, storage sheds, office accommodation at construction sites, or shelters to house plants during the spring season at shopping centres.

National Fire Code – 2023 Alberta Edition

NFC(AE) Division A, Subsection 1.1.1.

1.1.1. Application of this Code

1.1.1.1. Application of this Code

1) This Code applies to all new and existing *buildings* and facilities, and to *building* construction, renovation or demolition sites. (See Note A-1.1.1.1.(1).)

A-1.1.1.1.(1) Application of this Code. This Code applies to buildings and facilities, whether occupied or vacant. For the purposes of Sentence 1.1.1.1.(1), the term “facilities” is used in its broadest sense to include all premises that are not included in the definition of “building” in this Code, such as outdoor and underground areas, including areas for outdoor special events, structures and equipment. Such “facilities” are often associated with storage, distribution and manufacturing activities.

The NFC(AE) contains references to the National Building Code – 2023 Alberta Edition (NBC(AE)) for the design, construction and installation of many fire protection features. Some NBC(AE) requirements are most readily applied to new buildings and their retroactive application to existing situations as prescribed by this Code could result in some difficulty in achieving compliance. It is the intent of the NFC(AE) that an equivalent level of safety be achieved rather than necessarily achieving strict conformance to the NBC(AE). The application of this Code to the upgrading of existing facilities should be based on the judgment of the enforcement authority, who must deal with each case on its own merits.

The NFC(AE) states that the owner or the owner's authorized agent is responsible for carrying out the provisions of the Code (see Article 2.2.1.1. of Division C). However, the owner is expected to communicate with the authority having jurisdiction, who is in a position to assess the relative significance of variances from the NBC(AE) requirements. Such authority may then determine that upgrading measures are not necessary, on the basis that the existing arrangement represents an equivalent level of fire and life safety. The NFC(AE) presumes that the adopting legislation provides for the exercise of the necessary discretionary judgment on the part of the enforcing officials, along with appropriate rights to appeal (see Note A-2.2. of Division C). See also Note A-2.1.3.1.(1) of Division B and Note A-1.1.1.2. of Division A of the NBC(AE).

NFC(AE) Division B, Article 2.1.1.1.**2.1.1.1. Application**

1) This Part provides for the safety of the occupants in existing *buildings*, the elimination or control of fire hazards in and around *buildings*, the installation and maintenance of certain life safety systems in *buildings*, the installation and maintenance of posted signs and information, and the establishing of a fire safety plan for locations identified in Article 2.8.1.1.

NFC(AE) Division B, Subsection 2.1.2.**2.1.2.1. Classification**

1) For the purpose of applying this Code, every *building* or part thereof shall be classified according to its *major occupancy* in conformance with the NBC(AE). (See Note A-2.1.2.1.(1).)

2.1.2.2. Hazardous Activities

1) Activities that create a hazard and that are not allowed for in the original design shall not be carried out in a *building* unless provisions are made to control the hazard in conformance with this Code. (See Note A-2.1.2.2. (1).)

A-2.1.2.2. (1) Arena-type buildings are often used for events such as community dances, rallies and trade shows. These events may increase the occupant and fuel loads beyond that for which the space was designed. To ensure safety during such events, additional egress facilities may be required to compensate for the additional occupant load and, in some cases, additional fire suppression measures may be required to compensate for the increased fuel load.

Large public corridors in mercantile occupancies are also used on a temporary basis for community activities, merchandising and for special displays. In these cases, additional egress facilities and fire suppression may be needed, depending on the increase in hazard.

NFC(AE) Division B, Article 2.5.1.5.**2.5.1.5. Maintenance of Fire Department Access**

1) *Streets*, yards and roadways provided for fire department access shall be maintained so as to be ready for use at all times by fire department vehicles.

2) Vehicles shall not be parked to obstruct access by fire department vehicles and signs shall be posted prohibiting such parking.

NFC(AE) Division B, Article 2.6.1.9.**2.6.1.9. Commercial Cooking Equipment**

1) Commercial cooking equipment exhaust and fire protection systems shall be designed and installed in conformance with the NBC(AE).

2) Except as required in Sentences (3) to (5), the use, inspection and maintenance of commercial cooking equipment exhaust and fire protection systems shall be in conformance with NFPA 96, "Standard for Ventilation Control and Fire Protection of Commercial Cooking Operations."

3) Hoods, grease removal devices, fans, ducts, and other appurtenances shall be cleaned at frequent intervals to prevent surfaces from becoming heavily contaminated with grease or other residues. (See Note A-2.6.1.9.(3).) (See also Article 2.2.4.5. of Division C.)

4) Flammable cleaning materials or solvents shall not be used for the cleaning of exhaust systems.

5) Instructions for manually operating the fire protection systems shall be posted conspicuously in the kitchen as part of the fire safety plan.

6) Commercial cooking equipment that is certified shall be installed and maintained in conformance with its certification.

7) Uncertified commercial cooking equipment shall be installed and maintained so as not to create a fire hazard..

NFC(AE) Division B, Subsection 2.7.1.

2.7.1.3. Occupant Load

- 1) The maximum permissible *occupant load* for any room shall be calculated on the basis of the lesser of
 - a) 0.4 m² of net floor space per occupant, or
 - b) the *occupant load* for which *means of egress* are provided. (See Note A-2.7.1.3.(1).)
- 2) The number of occupants permitted to enter a room shall not exceed the maximum *occupant load* calculated in conformance with Sentence (1).

2.7.1.4. Signs

- 1) In *assembly occupancies* with *occupant loads* exceeding 60 persons, the *occupant load* shall be posted in conspicuous locations near the principal entrances to the room or *floor area*.
- 2) Signs required by the NBC(AE) to indicate the *occupant load* for a *floor area* shall be posted in conspicuous locations near the principal entrances to the *floor area*. (See Note A-2.7.1.4.(2).)
- 3) Signs required in Sentences (1) and (2) shall have lettering not less than 50 mm high with a 12 mm stroke.

2.7.1.5. Nonfixed Seating

- 1) When nonfixed seats are provided in *assembly occupancies*,
 - a) except as provided in Sentence (3), the seats shall be arranged in rows having an unobstructed passage of not less than 400 mm between rows measured horizontally between plumb lines from the backs of the seats in one row and the edges of the furthest forward projection of the seats in the next row behind in the unoccupied position,
 - b) except as provided in Sentence (2), aisles shall be located so that there are not more than 7 seats between every seat and the nearest aisle,
 - c) except as provided in Sentence (2), the clear width of an aisle in millimetres shall be not less than the greater of 1 100 or the product of the number of seats served by that aisle and 6.1,
 - d) the width of an aisle is permitted to be reduced to not less than 750 mm when serving 60 seats or fewer,
 - e) dead-end aisles shall not be longer than 6 m, and
 - f) except as provided in Sentence (3), when the *occupant load* exceeds 200 persons,
 - i) the seats in a row shall be fastened together in units of no fewer than 8 seats, or
 - ii) where there are 7 seats or fewer in a row, all the seats in the row shall be fastened together.

2.7.1.6. Maintenance

- 1) *Means of egress* shall be maintained in good repair and free of obstructions. (See Note A-2.7.1.6.(1).)

2.7.1.7. Exterior Passageways and Exit Stairs

- 1) Exterior passageways and exterior *exit* stairs serving occupied *buildings* shall be maintained free of snow and ice accumulations.
- 2) Where equipment is provided to melt snow or ice on exterior passageways and exterior *exit* stairs serving an occupied *building*, such equipment shall be maintained in working order or alternative measures shall be taken to comply with Sentence (1).

2.7.1.8. Free of Obstruction

- 1) Where an *exit* door leading directly to the outside is subject to being obstructed by parked vehicles or storage because of its location, a visible sign or a physical barrier prohibiting such obstructions shall be installed on the exterior side of the door.

NFC(AE) Division B, Section 2.8**Section 2.8. Emergency Planning****2.8.1.1. Application**

- 1) Fire emergency procedures conforming to this Section shall be provided for
- a) every *building* containing a *care, home-type care, treatment or detention occupancy*,
 - b) every *building* containing a school, college or university, or a daycare facility,
 - c) every *building* containing a licensed beverage establishment or a licensed restaurant,
 - d) every *building* containing an *assembly occupancy* other than one of those described in Clauses (b) and (c) with an *occupant load* of more than 30,
 - e) every *building* containing an area where *treatment* is provided in *business and personal services occupancies*,
 - f) every *building* required by the NBC(AE) to have a fire alarm system,
 - g) demolition and construction sites regulated under Section 5.6.,
 - h) storage areas in *buildings* or parts of *buildings* described in Article 3.2.1.1.,
 - i) outdoor areas where products described in Article 3.3.1.1. are stored,
 - j) every *building*, part of *building*, and open area described in Article 4.1.1.1., and
 - k) every *building*, part of *building*, and open area where processes and operations described in Article 5.1.1.1. take place.

2.8.1.2. Supervisory Staff

- 1) *Supervisory staff* shall be trained in the fire emergency procedures described in the fire safety plan before they are given any responsibility for fire safety. (See Note A-2.8.1.2.(1).)

NFC(AE) Division B, Article 2.8.2.1.**2.8.2.1. Measures in a Fire Safety Plan**

- 1) For *buildings*, parts of *buildings* and areas described in Article 2.8.1.1., a fire safety plan conforming to this Section shall be prepared in cooperation with the fire department and other applicable regulatory authorities.

NFC(AE) Division B, Article 2.9.1.1.**2.9.1.1. Tents and Air-Supported Structures**

- 1) Tents and *air-supported structures* shall be designed and installed in conformance with the NBC(AE).

NFC(AE) Division B, Article 2.9.2.1.**2.9.2.1. Flame-Retardant Treatments**

- 1) Flame-retardant treatments shall be renewed as often as is required to ensure that the material will pass the match flame test in NFPA 705, "Recommended Practice for a Field Flame Test for Textiles and Films." (See Note A-2.3.2.2.(1).)

A-2.3.2.2.(1) The small scale match flame test in NFPA 705, "Recommended Practice for a Field Flame Test for Textiles and Films," is a relatively simple test that can be used to assess the condition of flame-retardant treatments on samples from fabrics that have been in use for a while. It is not intended that NFPA 705 be used as the primary standard for the application of fire-retardant treatments.

NFC(AE) Division B, Sentence 4.1.1.1.(1)**4.1.1.1. Application** (See Sentence 1.1.1.1.(2) of Division A.)

- 1) Except as provided in Sentences (2) and (3), this Part applies to the storage, handling, use and processing of
- a) *flammable liquids* and *combustible liquids* in *buildings*, structures and open areas,

b) water-miscible liquid mixtures classified as *flammable liquids* or *combustible liquids* in conformance with Article 4.1.2.2. in *buildings*, structures and open areas, and
c) *dangerous goods* classified as flammable gases at *fuel-dispensing stations*. (See Note A-4.1.1.1.(1).)

A-4.1.1.1.(1) The all-inclusive phrase “buildings, structures and open areas” includes, but is not limited to tank farms, bulk plants, fuel-dispensing stations, industrial plants, refineries, process plants, distilleries, and to piers, wharves and airports that are not subject to overriding federal control.

Part 4 applies wherever flammable or combustible liquids are used or stored, except as specifically exempted in Sentences 4.1.1.1.(2) and (3). In addition, Section 4.6. applies to dangerous goods classified as flammable gases at fuel-dispensing stations.

Part 4 contains both general and occupancy-specific provisions. While general provisions apply to all occupancies or operations identified within the scope of Subsection 4.1.1., occupancy-specific provisions apply only to the specific occupancy or operation stated.

To determine the provisions that apply to a given situation, the first step is to confirm which Section or Subsection corresponds to the operation or occupancy: this will help identify the occupancy-specific provisions that apply. The next step is to ensure that all general requirements that apply to the operation or occupancy are also identified.

Application

This interpretation applies to indoor and outdoor special events requiring a permit, occupant load(s) and/or emergency planning requires the involvement and approval of the local authority having jurisdiction (AHJ).

Interpretation

The issuance of permits and enforcement of safety codes, including the enforcement of building, electrical, fire, plumbing and gas codes, is identified through the *Safety Codes Act* and its regulations. These codes apply to both indoor and outdoor special events and their associated activities.

How a Municipality decides to conduct the inspection of any special event, indoor or outdoor event or activity is their decision. Most municipalities work in conjunction with other parties (i.e., Alberta Health Services, other SCOs from various disciplines, AGLC, Municipal Business Licensing, RCMP or Municipal Police and Bylaw Services, etc.) to create an inspection process and/or a permitting process to assist all parties involved with completing these event inspections. Other municipalities conduct these inspections independently and there is no requirement to obtain a special event permit. Regardless of the process used to allow any special event, indoor or outdoor activity or event, the Alberta safety codes is applied to these venues.

Emergency Planning

The emergency plan created for these events involves various entities for the safe evacuation of occupants for any type of event. Emergency plans are typically reviewed by a Fire SCO, and are written to assist the persons hosting the event with the safe evacuation of patrons and for the local emergency personal to be aware of type of event, hazards associated with the event, evacuation procedures, location of medical tents, muster points and occupant capacity, etc.

[Building STANDATA | Alberta.ca](#)

[Fire STANDATA | Alberta.ca](#)

Emergency planning may include crowd control management based on the size and location of the event. This would be at the discretion of the AHJ and is usually in support of other agencies. Crowd control management may require the review and input from other agencies such as the local police service, bylaw, health services, occupational health, and safety, etc.

It is not uncommon for an AHJ to request verification of the training received by the crowd control personal. Based on the complexity of the event, crowd control personal may be required to provide proof of first aid training, crowd management training, etc.

Emergency planning may also include a site diagram. The AHJ may ask for the following information to include but not limited to, all street names, location of hydrants, access points for all first responders, layout of vendors, food trucks (including their applicable generators) and display areas, location of exits and bandstands be listed on the site diagram.

Regardless of, if the AHJ requests a site diagram, as part of the emergency planning, prior to the placement of tents, displays, bandstands, etc., event organizers must identify the location of any devices which may be used by first responders (i.e., hydrants, standpipe systems, fire alarm panels, etc.) and ensure there is unobstructed access to those devices. The AHJ will be able to provide the proper distances between the structure(s) and the device.

All access points for the use of first responders must be kept clear and unobstructed. Any fire connection points, such as hydrants and standpipe systems, must be always accessible.

Occupant load

The intent statements for occupant loads issued for the National Building Code of Canada (NBC) clarify the calculation of occupant loads is to limit the probability of overcrowding, which could lead to delayed egress during an emergency evacuation and to determine the minimum design load to calculate egress and exit capacity. It is also used for the determination, calculation, of the minimum design occupant load to calculate egress and exit capacity, when rooms or areas are intended for different occupant loads at different times.

The intent statement for occupant loads in the National Fire Code of Canada (NFC) indicate it is to limit the probability that a room will contain too many occupants, which could lead to overcrowding or insufficient capacity of the means of egress.

This indicates the intent of occupant loads in both the NBC and NFC is to limit the probability that delays in evacuation or movement of persons to a safe place in an emergency could lead to harm to persons.

Occupant loads for both indoor and outdoor events are to refer to [STANDATA 23-BCI-003R1/23-FCI-002R1](#) for calculations. If the outdoor special event has no structures, the NBC(AE) 3.17.1. and associated table still applies.

It is important to note an established perimeter of the event site must be identified. This established perimeter must be fixed in place and provide enough exiting capacity to achieve the minimum requirements of the occupant load's maximum numbers. Any use of temporary type of perimeter barriers used must be discussed with the AHJ.

It is important to note the issued occupant load number includes all persons in attendance of the special event. This number not only includes those participating in the special event as a guest but also paid or volunteer workers for the event. These paid or volunteer workers may include, but not limited to, bar staff, waitstaff, security, including any police, bylaw, first aid workers, crowd control managers and event organizers.

Any modifications of an event space after a permit(s) are issued or during an event must be approved by the AHJ. Modifications can impact proper exiting for patrons and potentially the issuance of a new occupant load.

For events that require seating, the AHJ may request the site diagram include the number of seats, aisle widths and the placement of exits in proximity to those seats.

Placement of exits must be adequate to accommodate the maximum occupant load allowed in the designated area. Example, for a standing only event taking place on a football field, it is safe to assume that most of those

[Building STANDATA | Alberta.ca](#)

[Fire STANDATA | Alberta.ca](#)

attending will congregate in front of the stage vs. the other end of the field. Exits are to be placed along the perimeter of the field however, there may be a requirement for additional exits to be placed in higher populated areas. In addition, all exits must be adequately marked to ensure those attending the event are able to see them regardless of the lighting.

Note, Article 3.3.2.1. of the NBC(AE) permits the use of NFPA 101, Chapter 12 and may be of assistance for the creation of an occupant load for outdoor spaces and outdoor venues.

Other special considerations

Tents, air supported structures, canopies, etc. are to be rated to the requirements of CAN/ULC-S109, "Standard Method for Flame Tests of Flame-Resistant Fabrics and Films." The allowance for the use of a tent, air supported structure, canopy, etc. that does not comply with the requirements of CAN/ULC-S109 is at the discretion of the AHJ.

Any open-air burning (i.e., fire pits), the use of candles, open flames or heaters requires a permit or permission from the AHJ. On site inspections while burning is taking place is at the discretion of the AHJ.

The use of pyrotechnics (i.e., fireworks) requires a permit or permission from the AHJ. It is important to note that not all municipalities allow for the sale, storage, and discharge of fireworks. Refer to the municipal bylaw for further information or contact the local AHJ.

Special events with amusement rides must contact the Alberta Elevating Devices & Amusement Rides Safety Association([AEDARSA](#)) for applicable permits.

This INTERPRETATION is applicable throughout the Province of Alberta.

Unless stated otherwise, all Code references in this STANDATA are to the National Building Code – 2023 Alberta Edition and the National Fire Code – 2023 Alberta Edition

Issued by the Provincial Building and Fire Administrators

Paul Chang
Provincial Building Administrator

Tina Parker
Provincial Fire Administrator

Alberta Municipal Affairs – Technical and Corporate Services

Email: safety.services@gov.ab.ca Phone: 1-866-421-6929

To sign up for our List Subscription Service: municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/am_list_subscription_services