

Haunted House Operators Encouraged to Work with Fire Rescue



PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Jennifer Reichelt, Deputy City Manager – 455-8417

HAUNTED HOUSE OPERATORS ENCOURAGED TO WORK WITH GREAT FALLS FIRE RESCUE

Great Falls, Montana - The Halloween season is creeping up on us, and the City's Fire Marshal, Dirk Johnson, is encouraging those who plan on operating a haunted house this month to be proactive and work with Great Falls Fire Rescue before opening for business. Haunted houses are normally designed as temporary facilities, made out of make shift and combustible materials, and designed as a maze – combined all of these elements have the potential to create a life safety hazard. It is important that haunted houses be properly laid out, designed with public safety concepts in mind and that the proper steps are in place to ensure the safety of their patrons.

Those organizations and/or businesses that plan to operate a haunted house are being asked to contact Dirk Johnson at 727-8070 during their planning phase, in order to ensure that life safety and fire prevention issues are addressed and included in their design.

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Haunted houses are considered an assembly use and/or special amusement building, which are subject to inspection by City officials. It is the City's role to ensure that they do not create life safety hazards or pose a public safety concern. If the proper planning steps are not taken and life safety problems arise during an inspection, opening may be delayed or a haunted house may be required to close, while appropriate corrective measures are taken.

Here are some examples of what a haunted house organizer may need to think about and consider as they develop their plans:

- Are there trained haunted house escorts to supervise and lead people through the haunted house?
- Are they using approved non-combustible materials to construct partitions?
- Have they ensured that there are no open flames and that all light fixtures are secured to prevent contact with combustible material?
- Are all exits clearly marked so patrons can exit the building without encountering barriers or other hindrances? The exit path must be at least 4 feet wide.
- All exits should lead directly to the outside and there should be enough exits to provide for a rapid exit from the building.
- Has an emergency escape plan been developed and have they trained escorts on the plan?
- Are there working fire extinguishers throughout the haunted house?
- Has the occupant load been determined? Based on occupant load – the number and location of exits must be determined.

Great Falls Fire Rescue wants the community to enjoy Halloween; however protecting the community and our residents is always a priority. It is important that event organizers work with the Fire Marshal to create and develop both a safe and fun haunted house this holiday season. For more information about life safety issues and designing a safe haunted house, contact Dirk Johnson the City's Fire Marshal at 727-8070.

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Supporting Documents

 [Press Release - 2013 Haunted Houses](#) (227 KB) (PDF)

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