



## Event Planner Safety

Whether your event is an indoor office party or a large gala under a tent with hundreds in attendance, there are safety and compliance considerations that you should be aware of during the planning process.

Events that impact fire protection systems, means of egress, or other life safety features may require a code compliance review or approval by the local authorities having jurisdiction (AHJ).

Use this important guidance information from EH&S to help ensure that your event is a success. If you have more specific questions, ask your school/unit [Designated Safety Officer \(DSO\)](#); we are here to help!

### Crowd Control and Evacuation

The Massachusetts Fire Safety Code (527 CMR 1) requires that crowd control management be provided when "the owner or operator of a nightclub, dance hall, discothèque, bar, or any facility has an event that features entertainment by live band or recorded music generating above normal sound levels, with a specific area designated for dancing, and an occupant load of 100 persons or more". The owner or operator must then "designate one crowd manager for every 250 occupants or portion thereof based upon the Certificate of Inspection issued".

The designated Crowd Manager must be trained, certified, and complete a daily inspection of the event using the [Massachusetts Crowd Manager Fire and Building Safety Checklist](#).<sup>1</sup> See [Massachusetts Crowd Manager Training and Certification](#).

Additional Crowd Manager duties include:

- Maintaining clear paths of egress
- Assuring that the facility does not exceed its occupancy load limit

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<sup>1</sup> See 527 CMR 1.00 Section 20.1.5.6.1.1



- Initiating a fire alarm if necessary
- Directing occupants to the exits
- Assuring general fire and life safety awareness of employees and occupants
- Assuring that exit announcements are made in accordance with the law

## Candle and Propane Fire Safety

The use of open flames, candles, or pyrotechnical devices are strictly prohibited inside any Harvard building or tent. Persons requesting candles for religious ceremonies should consult with their building manager.

Flameless battery-operated LED candles can be used at events for a similar lighting effect without the obvious fire hazards. LED candles typically operate for approximately 350 hours on two C size batteries.

The Massachusetts Fire Safety Code (527 CMR 1.00) prohibits the use or storage of liquefied petroleum gas containers used for cooking inside or on balconies above the first floor of any building or structure; cooking is allowed only at ground level. The total amount of propane allowed without a permit is 42 pounds (two propane cylinders).

Boston requires that propane cylinders be placed in a plastic crate on a level surface. Both Boston and Cambridge prohibit the change out of tanks during an event.

## Tent Safety

Events in Boston using tents are required to obtain a permit from the Boston Fire Department (BFD) and/or Inspectional Services. Very specific documentation is required, and planning must occur well in advance of the event and include a consultation with a Fire Protection Engineer. Seating plans and CAD drawings are required. See [BFD Requirements and Business Process for the Issuance of a Tent Permit](#).



To erect a tent in Cambridge, you must submit a building application along with drawings (i.e., seating plans, tent layout) and flame spread characteristics (i.e., tent) to Inspectional Services. Inspectional Services will review the application and approve or comment on required changes. An inspection is required.

Keep in mind any electrical work needs to be separately permitted. The International Fire Code provides additional safety guidance.

## Catering and Food Safety

Choosing a caterer is more than a matter of taste. Make sure the one you choose has a valid, current catering license and a temporary food service permit from either Cambridge or Boston (depending on serving location). If your caterer will be preparing and serving food at the event (as opposed to dropping it off), request that they provide a certified Food Protection Manager on-site during the event. This trained and qualified person will oversee everything from proper hot and cold holding of your food to correct handling and serving.

[EH&S Catering Vendor Guidelines](#) have helpful information for you and your caterer to ensure that they provide food that meets the health and safety standards of the University. Please note that EH&S does not register caterers during the school year and reserves this service for commencement week only.

## Pest Control and Sanitation

EH&S reminds event planners across Harvard campuses to plan ahead for the timely removal of leftover food and wastes that are not consumed during the gathering. Leftover food and waste provide attractive nutrition for pests, which may enter the site to exploit them.

Make arrangements in advance with facility personnel or waste management staff to provide separate containers for food waste, recyclables, and trash. These wastes cannot be co-mingled in trash bags or dumpsters, as Harvard is required by the Department of Environmental Protection to separate them prior to disposal.



Wastes should be removed at the conclusion of your event, and should not sit in trash barrels overnight. Never dump event wastes into a convenient dumpster managed by others; make sure you are accessing the correct container for your school or department's event.

Follow these easy steps to help add to the safety and enjoyment of your guests and the wider Harvard community:

- Order enough, but not too much, food for your event. This will minimize leftovers and waste.
- Keep exterior doors to the building closed. Propping doors open encourages pests to enter from outside.
- Remove food, recycled materials, supplies, and all trash immediately following the event to ensure no overnight storage on-site. Deposit these materials in the assigned, tightly closed containers.
- Make arrangements with the caterer or custodians to sweep and wash floor and tables to remove all food debris from the room or tent.

See the [EH&S Pest Control Program](#) for more information.

## Outdoor Stage and Event Productions

Proper planning and contractor selection can make the difference between executing a memorable and safe outdoor stage event or performance, or one that could potentially expose our students, faculty, staff, and guests to harm.

The availability of qualified vendors may vary depending on your chosen date, campus resources, city licensing, and other factors so we suggest that you begin planning at least six to eight weeks prior to the event.



# HARVARD

## Campus Services

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY

Working with event planners, engineers, and world-class vendors, EH&S has assembled the [Outdoor Stage and Event Productions Program and Safety Planning Checklist](#) to assist with preparation and planning. Topics include:

- Stage, platform, tower, and equipment rigging
- Fire protection
- Training and certification requirements
- Licensing/permitting
- Engineering requirements
- Electrical safety<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> All temporary electrical installations must be permitted and comply with the National Electrical Code standards. All outdoor electrical must be rated for outdoor use and weather resistant.