

Multi-Level Exhibit Spaces
Hanging Sign Requirements

Multiple Levels or Ceilings (including tents):

"Double-decker" exhibit spaces or exhibit spaces with ceilings (including tents) were previously required to be equipped with special fire safety devices. However, the Fire Safety Department at Baltimore Convention Center and major show contractors have worked together to develop codes for trade shows that offer a safe and cost-effective alternative to sprinklers. These requirements apply to all exhibits that have a ceiling or second story.

Fire Code Requirements:

For exhibits using automatic sprinklers, the amount and type of sprinkler coverage you need depends on your exhibit space specifications. If you would prefer automatic sprinklers, or are required to use them, contact the Fire/Safety Office to discuss your options.

Explanation of Fire Code Items for Multiple Level Exhibit Spaces:

Each enclosed or covered area must be protected by an audible smoke detector. This includes storage closets built into the exhibit.

Each enclosed or covered area must display a charged and approved fire extinguisher.

The maximum occupancy of the load-bearing area(s) in a multi-story exhibit is limited to one person per fifteen net square feet of floor space, not to exceed a total of twenty-five persons. This maximum occupancy must be posted.

Exhibit spaces that are multi-story, contain covered assembly areas, such as conference areas or theaters, or extend beyond 300 feet, must meet the following minimum life safety requirements.

- This type of exhibit space requires a separately approved floor plan by the BCPD/PAO and documentation of load capabilities for the second level must be provided.
- There should not be less than two means of egress from each load bearing area(s) in excess of 200 square feet in a multi-story exhibit, or from each covered assembly area in excess of 200 square feet.
- An "automatic extinguishing system" must protect single level exhibit spaces greater than 300 square feet and covered with a ceiling.
- A single exhibit or group of exhibits with ceilings that DO NOT require sprinklers must be separated by a minimum of 10 feet where the aggregate ceiling exceeds 300 square feet.

Smoke Detectors:

All areas under the second level or ceiling, including closets, need to be equipped with an UL-approved (or similarly-approved), battery-operated smoke detector. If this space is enclosed after hours, the smoke detector must be audible outside the enclosed area.

Fire Extinguishers:

UL-approved (or similarly approved) 2-1/2 lb. ABC-type fire extinguisher must be posted in a clearly visible and readily accessible area for each 200 sq. ft. enclosure.

Posted Certificate of Fire Retardant Materials:

A certificate verifying exhibit space construction materials are fire retardant must be posted in a conspicuous place within the exhibit.

Certified Approval:

After the exhibit has been designed, the blueprints must be approved and stamped by a licensed professional structural engineer. These blueprints should include dimensions and an isometric rendering.

Fire Marshal Review:

Send your stamped blueprints to Baltimore Convention Center for review at least 60 days before the event opens to allow sufficient time for any needed corrections. Be sure that your plans show dimensions and an isometric rendering of the exhibit. In addition, all areas requiring sprinkler protection must be highlighted. If you do not provide your plans on time, it may cause delays or disapproval of your exhibit space during the pre-event fire inspection.

Structural Supports:

Exhibit spaces must be designed to be self-supporting. Nothing shall be taped, mounted, or attached in any form or manner to walls, doors, or facility structure. The driving of nails, tacks, or screws into floors, walls, columns, ceilings, or trim will not be permitted, nor will drilling of holes into any portion of the expo halls.

Signs:

No electric flashing signs will be permitted, unless approved by Event Management in writing, in advance.

Sign Height:

Signs are considered display material and must conform to the height limitations for display material as specified for each type of exhibit space. The sole exception is a company logo (name, identification, or letters) that is attached to a piece of equipment, regardless of its height, provided that is how the equipment is sold.

Signs/Lighting Grid Work:

Signs which are a part of and supported by a free standing structure may be utilized for exhibitor identification or promotion. Signs/grid work may be hung from the ceiling but must comply with the facility rules and regulations, as well as applicable NFMT display rules and regulations. The bottom of the sign must be a minimum of 12 feet above the floor and the top of the sign must not be higher than 18 feet above the floor. All hanging sign forms must be filled out properly and sent to the official contractor.

Signs, Hanging — Requirements:

No equipment may be attached to the ceiling of the expo hall, beams or trusses, unless approved by Baltimore Convention Center and installed by the official show service contractor. Expo Management allows ceiling-hung corporate identification for exhibiting companies occupying island space of 400 square feet or more.

The increased size of events at Baltimore Convention Center and the complexity of move-in and move-out have brought about greater awareness for safety in all aspects of event operations. This is especially true in the area of hanging materials and signs from structural members. Based on this concern, the Convention Facility has established the following policy:

All orders for ceiling hung materials must be submitted for approval and accompanied by the following three items:

- 1) A certified weigh bill to verify assembled weight (not including crate).
- 2) Two copies of floor plans or diagrams of sign(s) or material to be hung approved by a structural engineer must be mailed to the Fire Marshall.
- 3) Statement of structural integrity signed by exhibitor and sign builder.

Baltimore Convention Center
Attention: Fire Marshall
One West Pratt St.
Baltimore, MD 21201

A copy of all three items must also be sent to:

ROC Exhibitions, Inc.
Bob Posch - NFMT®
1963 University Lane
Lisle, IL 60532

Free Form or Island Exhibit Spaces Guidelines:

All exhibit spaces exceeding twelve feet (12') in height, whether a tower, pylon, or second story, regardless of whether people will occupy an upper area or not, must meet the following criteria:

- Drawings must be signed or stamped by a reviewing structural engineer indicating that the structure design is properly engineered for its proposed use.
- Drawings must be signed by an authorized official of the exhibit-building company, indicating that the structure is built in compliance with the details and specifications set forth in the drawings.
- Drawings must be available on show site for inspection by Event Management, the installation/dismantling contractor, exhibit and/or governmental authorities during the time the exhibit is being erected, exhibited, and dismantled.
- Signs are to be posted at entrances to all second story exhibit spaces that will be occupied, indicating the maximum number of people the structure will accommodate.
- All requests for free-form or island exhibit spaces must first be approved by Event Management.
- Exhibits with second story occupancy must also comply with all local regulations, and all plans must be approved by the Fire Marshall. Please refer to Baltimore Convention Center.

For further details regarding local Ordinances pertaining to multi-story exhibit spaces, please contact Baltimore Convention Center at 410-649-7000.