



HAUNTED HOUSES

Office of Safety & Security Fact Sheet

In order to create haunted houses that are safe for children, and meet the requirements of the Fire Prevention Code, the following steps must be followed.

APPROVALS

- The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department's Fire Prevention Division must inspect and approve haunted houses constructed in schools prior to opening to the public. **An inspection request shall be made to the fire Prevention Division (703-246-4849) at least 72 hours in advance of the scheduled event.**

LOCATION

- Indoor haunted houses MUST be located in a room, NOT in any hallway. Gymnasiums and cafeterias are most often used, but individual classrooms can be used if separate "themes" or age groups are desired.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- Exit doors, aisles, passageways, etc., shall be unobstructed and at least 36 inches wide.
- Dead end passages must not exceed 20 feet in length.
- All groups shall be escorted by an attendant and limited to ten persons.
- All attendants shall have a flashlight.
- Someone must be positioned near the light switch to turn on the lights in the event of a fire or other emergency.

DECORATIONS

- All requirements of the Policy for *Displays and Decorative Materials in Schools* must be followed (e.g. nothing hung from the ceiling, nothing within 24 inches of the ceiling, etc.)
- All decorations shall be flame resistant. Treat all combustibles with a flame retardant.
- Black plastic sheeting shall not be used.
- Open flames (such as candles or lanterns) are not allowed.
- Fog machines or any type of vapor or smoke producing device (including dry ice) shall not be used.
- Cornstalks, hay bales, or like materials are prohibited.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

- All electrical cords, devices, and lamps shall be listed by a recognized testing laboratory such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), Electrical Testing Laboratories (ETL), or Factory Mutual (FM).
- All devices shall be in excellent condition.
- The use of surge protected, multi-plug power strips are preferable to extension cords.
- The use of extension cords must be approved by the Fire Marshal. Extension cords must be heavy duty three-wire (grounded) type, and cannot exceed 25 feet in length. Cords cannot be plugged together to make longer cords, nor can they be overloaded.
- Power strips or extension cords shall not be pinched, taped to walls, extended through walls, ceilings, or under doors or floor coverings.

For more information, contact Ken Wilson at 703-658-3760 or visit the web site at <http://www.fcps.edu/fts/safety-security/factsheets/index.htm>.