

2.14 Submittal Guidelines and Requirements for Fire Permit Applications (2025)

Reference: The general guidelines and requirements contained in this bulletin are recognized as current accepted practices of the San Francisco Fire Department. The specific requirements contained in this bulletin are referenced from the most current San Francisco Municipal Code including San Francisco Fire Code Chapter 1, Business and Tax Regulation Code Article 27, and Transportation Code Article 6.

Purpose: The purpose of this bulletin is to establish guidelines and requirements for submitting an operational permit application for fire-regulated activities or operations as defined by the most current San Francisco Fire Code. This bulletin also provides definitions and instructions to assist the applicant when completing a fire permit application.

Scope: This bulletin applies to all persons, companies, organizations, and entities engaged in an activity or operation that requires an approved fire permit from the San Francisco Fire Department.

I. DEFINITIONS

1. **Annual Fire Permit.** An operational fire permit valid for at least (365) calendar days from the date of issuance; most annual permits require the permit holder to also possess a current tax license certificate.
2. **Conditional Use Fire Permit.** An operational fire permit of a duration not to exceed (90) calendar days that authorizes the permit holder to conduct a fire-regulated activity or operation within the specific restrictions and conditions stated on the approved permit.
3. **Conditions of Permit.** Restrictions or conditions placed on the activity or use that must be followed for the permit to be valid.
4. **Fire Watch.** For purposes of this bulletin, SFFD personnel hired by the owner to ensure inspection of the event area prior to and during occupancy, and continuous and systematic surveillance of a building, tent, or event by one or more qualified individuals for the purposes of identifying and controlling fire hazards, detecting early signs of unwanted fire, raising an alarm of fire, directing occupants to exits, and notifying the fire department suppression personnel while the event is occurring.
5. **Interdepartmental Staff Committee On Traffic and Transportation (ISCOTT).** A committee of City agencies responsible for authorizing the temporary use or occupancy of public streets.
6. **Permit Address.** Physical address or location where the fire-regulated activity or operation occurs.
7. **Permit Holder.** Person, company, organization, or entity that engages, either directly or indirectly, in a fire-regulated activity or operation and assumes legal responsibility for that activity or operation.
8. **Sponsor.** Person, company, organization, or entity that assumes the responsibility for organizing an event, or is authorized to represent an event, whether for profit or not, and assumes specific application responsibilities.
9. **Temporary Fire Permit.** An operational fire permit that expires in less than (365) calendar days from the date of issuance.

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10. **Vendor:** Person, company, organization, or entity that engages, either directly or indirectly, in a fire-regulated activity or operation during an event, whether for profit or not, and assumes responsibility for that activity or operation.

II. PERMIT APPLICATION

An approved San Francisco Fire Department Operational Fire Permit is required to engage in or conduct a regulated activity or operation as described in the current San Francisco Fire Code. A completed permit application must be submitted and approval received prior to engaging in or conducting the proposed activity or operation within the City and County of San Francisco.

1. **Each Regulated Activity/Operation.** Each regulated activity or operation requires a separate fire permit application and permit fee.
2. **Specific Address/Time.** A fire permit is issued to a permit holder to conduct a specified regulated activity or operation at a specified permit address or location for a specified date and/or period of time.
3. **Resubmission For Changes.** A new fire permit application, required submittal documents, and permit fee must be resubmitted when there is a change to any one of the following:
 - A. Permit Holder.
 - B. Type of Regulated Activity or Operation.
 - C. Permit Address or Location.
 - D. Date of Activity or Operation.
 - E. Duration of Activity or Operation.
4. **Inspection.** A SFFD fire inspection(s) shall be conducted prior to the approval of any fire permit.
5. **Acceptance.** The acceptance of a permit application by the Fire Department shall not be considered as approval or permission to conduct the requested regulated activity or operation.

III. CONDITIONS OF PERMIT

Prior to issuing the permit, SFFD personnel will assign conditions to the permit which will be listed in writing on the permit. For example, for open flame permits, a condition of permit may be that all combustibles must be kept a minimum distance of 10 ft. from the device. Violations of the conditions void the permit.

IV. PERMIT APPLICATION SUBMITTAL TIMELINE

1. **5 Business Days.** Permit applications to conduct a regulated activity or operation must be submitted at least five (5) business days prior to the requested start date of the activity or operation.
2. **10 Business Days.** Applications for Flame Effect Performances, Pyrotechnic Effects, and Firework Displays must be submitted at least ten (10) business days prior to the activity or operation.

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3. **Shorter Timeline.** The Fire Department may elect to accept and review applications with a shorter submittal timeline when the request can be accommodated, however, such applications may be subject to overtime review fees in addition to all other relevant fees.

V. PERMIT APPLICATION FEES

Fire fees for a regulated activity or operation at an event approved by ISCOTT are billed by and paid directly to ISCOTT. For all other regulated activities or operations, application fees are required to be collected by the San Francisco Fire Department at the time of submission of each fire permit application.

1. **Submit in Full.** All required permit application fee(s) shall be submitted in full with the fire permit application(s).
2. **Submission Without Appropriate Payment.** Fire permit applications submitted without appropriate fee payment(s) will be considered incomplete and will not be processed. Applicants that submit incomplete application(s) will be notified as such by telephone and all submitted document(s) shall be returned to the applicant for resubmission.
3. **Operational Permit Fees.** A schedule of SFFD Operational Permit fees is located in SFFC Table 107-A.
4. **Operational Permit Fees (ISCOTT).** A schedule of SFFD Operational Permit fees charged for events approved by ISCOTT is located in the San Francisco Transportation Code.
5. **Contact Information.** The applicant is strongly advised to contact the SFFD Operational Permit Section at (628) 652-3260 to obtain the most current fees before submitting a permit application to prevent delay in processing the permit application.

VI. REDUCED PERMIT APPLICATION FEES

As a service to the customer, the SFFD allows a permit applicant to consolidate permits and pay reduced permit application fees for multiple regulated activities or operations in certain situations. Applicants are also required to comply with specific fire permit application submittal conditions to qualify for these reduced fees.

1. **Situations for Reduction.** Fire permit fees may be reduced in two situations:
 - A. **Option 1: Multiple Activities/Operations.** An applicant that is engaged in multiple regulated permit activities or operations. The full application fee is collected for the first permit and additional applications are charged reduced fees provided all of the following conditions are satisfied:
 - (1) **Same Permit Holder.** The same permit holder is named on all permit applications and is legally responsible for all of the proposed regulated activities or operations.
 - (2) **Same Location.** The activities or operations must occur at the same permit address or location.

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(3) **Same Expiration Time.** The activities or operations must expire at the same time (with exceptions).

(4) **All Documentation Submitted.** All permit applications, required documents (including liability insurance), supplemental forms, and appropriate fees for all proposed activities or operations are submitted at the same time.

B. **Option 2: Sponsor and Vendor.** An event that has a sponsor and at least one vendor engaged in a fire-regulated activity or operation. The full application fee is collected from the sponsor for each different regulated activity or operation. However, reduced fees are charged to vendors engaged in that specific type of activity or operation provided all of the following conditions and responsibilities are satisfied:

(1) **Sponsor Responsibilities.** The responsibilities for the sponsors shall include all of the following:

- a. **Document Distribution.** Distribution of fire permit application form(s), Vendor Acknowledgement form(s), and SFFD Administrative Bulletin 5.10 "Safety Requirements for Regulated Activities at Outdoor Food & Street Fairs" to all vendors engaging in fire-regulated activities or operations.
- b. **5 Business Days for Submission.** Submission of completed required documents and fees to the fire department arranged in an orderly manner at least five (5) business days prior to the event.
- c. **Required Documentation.** Required documents include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Sponsor Fire Permit Application Form(s).
 - ii. Sponsor Acknowledgment Form.
 - iii. Vendor Fire Permit Application Form(s) and any supporting documents provided by those vendors.
 - iv. Vendor Acknowledgment Form(s).
 - v. List of business names of all vendors engaging in regulated activities or operations.
 - vi. Proof of General Liability Insurance. (Exception: insurance documents for events approved by ISCOTT must be provided directly to ISCOTT).
 - vii. SFFD fees for regulated activities or operations at an event approved by ISCOTT are billed by and paid directly to ISCOTT. For other regulated activities or operations, all application fees and any additional required fire department fees made payable to the San Francisco Fire Department.
 - viii. Event Site Map(s) indicating:
 - (a) Location(s) of each fire-regulated activity or operation.
 - (b) Location of each vendor by DBA.
 - (c) Location(s) of and distance(s) (in feet and inches) to fire exits from the closest regulated activity or operation.

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(2) Vendor Responsibilities. The responsibilities for the vendors shall include all of the following:

- a. **10 Business Days for Submission.** Submission of completed required documents and fees arranged in an orderly manner to the event sponsor at least ten (10) business days prior to the event.
 - b. **Required Documentation.** Required documents include, but not limited to:
 - i. Vendor Fire Permit Application Form and any additional requested documents.
 - ii. Vendor Acknowledgment Form.
 - iii. Proof of General Liability Insurance.
 - iv. SFFD fees for regulated activities or operations at an event approved by ISCOTT are billed by and paid directly to ISCOTT. For other regulated activities or operations, all application fees and any additional required fire department fees made payable to the San Francisco Fire Department.
2. **Separate Application.** A separate fire permit application is required for each type of regulated activity or operation.
 3. **Period of Time for Fees.** Fire permit applications, required documents, and all fees are required to be submitted within the specified period of time.

VII. ADDITIONAL FEES

1. **Fire Watch.** The San Francisco Fire Code authorizes the Fire Code Official to require fire watch personnel for events when, in their opinion, it is essential for public safety in a place of assembly or any other place where people congregate, either because of the number of persons, or the nature of the activity. When a fire watch is required by the SFFD, the owner shall be required to pay the cost of hiring SFFD inspection personnel to be on site for the time periods specified by the Permit's Officer. Such fees are assessed at the overtime pay rate and are subject to a four (4) hour minimum charge.
2. **Additional Fees.** The San Francisco Fire Department is authorized by City ordinances to collect additional fees imposed by other agencies for specific types of permit activities or operations. These fees are collected when a fire permit application is submitted and are in addition to any and all SFFD fire fees.
 - A. **Posting Fee.** A Posting fee shall be collected by the SFFD when a fire permit application is submitted for any of the following activities or operations:
 - (1) Vehicle Repair Garage, Major, Operation
 - (2) Vehicle Repair Garage, Minor, Operation
 - (3) Motor Fuel Facility, Operation
 - (4) Motor Fuel Facility, Self-Service, Operation
 - (5) Compressed Gas, Fueling Station, Operation
 - (6) Junk Yard / Wrecking Yard, Operation
 - (7) High-Piled Storage

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- B. **City Planning Referral Fee.** A City Planning Referral fee may be collected by the SFFD when a fire permit application is submitted for a regulated activity or operation if conducted at an address or location that has not been approved for that specific activity or operation in the past.
- C. **Certificates.** The applicant should also be aware that most fire permits require the permit holder to possess both a valid San Francisco Business Registration Certificate and a current, appropriate “D Class” San Francisco Tax License Certificate for the fire permit to be valid.
 - (1) **SF Tax License.** The billing for and issuance of an annual SF Tax License is handled directly by the SF Tax Collector.
 - (2) **SF Business Tax Registration Certificate.** The billing for and issuance of a SF Business Tax Registration Certificate is handled directly by the SF Tax Collector.
 - (3) **Contact for Assistance.** Please contact the Office of the Treasurer and Tax Collector for license, registration, and billing assistance.

VIII. WAIVER OF PERMIT APPLICATION FEES

A fire permit and a permit application fee are always required to engage in or to conduct regulated activities or operations; however, the permit application fee may be waived in its entirety with written proof of any one of the following:

- 1. **Exception Letter.** Exemption letter from the San Francisco Board of Supervisors stating that the named permit holder is exempt from paying San Francisco Fire Department Operational Permit fee(s) and/or Tax License fees.
- 2. **Veteran Status.** (See California Business and Practices Code Section 16001.7) The permit holder must provide proof of all of the following for veteran status:
 - A. Honorably discharged or honorably relieved from the military, naval, or air service of the United States.
 - B. California Residency.
 - C. Vending only goods, wares, or merchandise owned by the veteran and are not “spirituous, malt, or vinous, or other intoxicating liquor”.
- 3. **Non-Profit Organization.** Place of Assembly (permanent-does not apply to temporary) owned and operated by a non- profit organization. The permit holder must provide proof of all of the following:
 - A. IRS- approved non-profit, tax exempt status.
 - B. Current property ownership listed with the San Francisco Tax Assessor Agency.

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IX. ADDITIONAL FORMS, DOCUMENTS, AND INFORMATION

Depending upon the type of fire department permit, certain regulated activities and operations require the inclusion of additional forms, documents, and information with a permit application. Note that the applicant is strongly advised to contact the Operational Permit section to confirm additional requirements before submitting a fire permit application. These forms, documents, and information may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Insurance. The following information shall apply for insurance:

A. **General Liability Insurance.** All temporary permit applications must include proof of general liability insurance. Proof of liability insurance for an event approved by ISCOTT is submitted directly to ISCOTT. The insurance policy shall comply with all of the following:

- (1) **Insurance Amount.** Maintained in force during the full term of the permit, insurance with limits not less than one million dollars (\$1,000,000) each occurrence Combined Single Limit Bodily Injury and Property Damage, including Contractual Liability, Broadform Property Damage, Products, and Completed Operations Coverages.

Note: In consultation with the City Risk Manager, the fire department may specify a greater or lesser amount for the policy when, in the fire code official's opinion, conditions at the location of use indicate a greater or lesser amount is required.

- (2) **Names.** Name, as Additional Insured, the City and County of San Francisco, its officers, agents, and employees.

- (3) **Primary Insurance.** State that such policies are primary insurance to any other insurance available to additional insureds with respect to any claims arising out of activities under the permit, and that insurance applies separately to each insured against whom claim is made or suit is brought.

- (4) **Risk Manager.** Arranged in format and with an insurer satisfactory to the City's Risk Manager.

B. **Worker's Compensation Insurance.** Worker's Compensation insurance information if such insurance is required by law. Proof of Worker's Compensation insurance related to an event approved by ISCOTT is submitted directly to ISCOTT.

2. **Supplemental Application for Special Events Form.** Supplemental Application for Special Events Form is required with all temporary permit applications.
3. **Event Sponsor Acknowledgement Form.** Event Sponsor Acknowledgement Form is required for applicable events.
4. **Vendor Acknowledgement Form.** Vendor Acknowledgement Form is required for applicable events.
5. **Supplemental Application for Fireworks Display Form.** Supplemental Application for Fireworks Display Form is required with Pyrotechnic special effects and fireworks display permit applications.

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6. **Flame Act Safety Sheet Form.** Flame Act Safety Sheet Form is required with all open flame permit applications involving a flame act or a flame performance.
7. **Required Statement of Understanding for Hot Work-Roofer Form.** Required Statement of Understanding for Hot Work-Roofer Form is required with all hot work permit applications when an open flame torch is used.
8. **Additional Required Submittal Documents and Information.** In addition to required SFFD forms and “Other Information” specifically requested on the permit application (e.g. site plan, amounts, location, etc.), certain permits may require supporting documents and information to be submitted with the permit application including, but not limited to:
 - A. **Place of Assembly.** Copy (no larger than 11 inches by 17 inches) of approved floor plan(s) reviewed by the Fire and Building Departments showing application number, occupancy classification, and occupant load.
 - B. **Temporary/Special Place of Assembly.** Copy of dimensioned floor plan of the space requested showing details of the means of egress facilities, use of each area, seating arrangement, and proposed occupant load; written permission from the legal owner of the space allowing the proposed temporary use.
 - C. **Tent/Membrane Structure.** Flame Certificate. Prior to occupancy of certain large tents, an inspection report, prepared by a California licensed structural engineer will be required to document and assure structural stability of the tent or structure, anchorage, etc. after installation. (See SFFD AB 2.13).
 - D. **Spray Painting.** Copy (no larger than 11 inches by 17 inches) of floor plan(s) approved by the Building Department showing application number, occupancy classification, floor plan, spray booth.
 - E. **Fireworks/Special Effects.** Copy of CA operator license, site plan, separation distances, sequence of operations, safety personnel and devices, copies of CA State Fire Marshal required permits/licenses (see the current adopted standards: NFPA 1123/NFPA 1126 for guidance).
 - F. **Open Flame - Candle, Assembly.** Approved open flame device form: each different type of device must be tested by the SFFD at the Permit Center.
 - G. **Temporary Open Flame - Candle, Decorative Device.** Approved open flame device form: each different type of device must be tested by the SFFD at the Permit Center.
 - H. **Temporary Open Flame - Flame Effect Performance or a Fire Act.** Submit required information as stated in SFFD Administrative Bulletin 2.12 “Flame Effect Performance Application Requirements”.
 - I. **Aboveground/Underground Tank Removal.** Dimensioned site plan indicating location of tank.

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X. PERMIT APPLICATION FORM

1. **Submission Location.** Completed permit application forms, additional required items, and fees must be submitted in person to the San Francisco Fire Department, Permit Center, 49 So. Van Ness Ave, San Francisco, 94103.
 - A. **Completion and Fees.** The permit application will be checked for completeness. All required submittal documents and required fees must be provided before the application package will be accepted by the fire department and your proposal is reviewed.

Exception: SFFD fees and insurance documents for regulated activities or operations at an event approved by ISCOTT.
2. **Resources for Forms.** The current SFFD Fire Permit Application form and SFFD supporting forms are available online at the San Francisco Fire Department website at www.sf-fire.org. Forms may also be obtained in person from the San Francisco Fire Department, Permit Center, 49 So. Van Ness Ave, San Francisco, 94103. Please contact the Operational Permit Section at (628) 652-3260 if you need assistance with the fire permit application, submittal requirements, fees, or have operational permit questions.