



CITY OF CROWN POINT

David D.F. Uran
Mayor

FIRE RESCUE

David B. Crane
Fire Chief

Gerard Abraham
Assistant Fire Chief

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Lake County Fairgrounds
889 S. Court Street
Crown Point, IN 46307

It has recently been brought to our attention that there have been some questions concerning cooking within an occupied public building. I would first like to make clear that these rules and codes are not the fire department or City of Crown Point rules and codes. These rules and codes are strictly from the State of Indiana Fire Code (IFC), in which we must enforce, along with the State Fire Marshalls Office. I will provide a basic interpretation of the Indiana Fire Code to help you better understand this issue and to assist you with future events. Please understand that these codes have been created because of unfortunate loss of life and property in our history. Adhering to these codes will help keep liability off yourselves, the fairgrounds, Lake County, and the City of Crown Point if an unfortunate accident does occur.

IFC Section 313.1: "Prohibits the use of portable cooking equipment within a building"

Interpretation: This rule makes it clear that no 'cooking' of food can occur within a public building. This code does not cover private dwellings. 'Cooking' is defined as the use of charcoal grills, gas grills, deep fryers, or any other open flames. Sterno-type heaters for catering, electric griddles, electric grills, coffee makers, hot pads, crock pots, etc. are allowed.

IFC Section 313.1.1: "The fire code official is authorized to require removal of fueled equipment from locations where the presence of such equipment is determined by the fire code official to be hazardous"

Interpretation: This rule authorized the City of Crown Point and/or the Indiana State Fire Marshall to require any fueled equipment to be removed from within a building.

IFC Section 308.3: "Open-flame devices shall not be used in a Group A occupancy"

Interpretation: The use of open-flame devices in Group A (Assembly) Occupancies (such as the Industrial Arts, 4-H, Fine Arts buildings) where a large number of people are gathered for entertainment, instruction, food or drink consumption, social functions, is prohibited. Examples of open flames are gas-powered cooking equipment and candles.

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126 N. East Street • Crown Point, IN 46307

Office (219) 662-3248

Fax (219) 662-3266

IFC Section 314.4: “Liquid or gas-fueled vehicles, boats, or other motorcraft shall not be located indoors except as follows: 1) Batteries are disconnected, 2) Fuel in the fuel tank does not exceed one-quarter tank or 5 gallons (whichever is least), 3) Fuel tanks and fill openings are closed and sealed to prevent tampering, and 4) Vehicles, boats, are not fueled or defueled within the building.”

Interpretation: This code allows for vehicles to be located inside an occupied building, as long as all 4 of these requirements are met. This includes food trucks.

IFC Section 403.1: “Fire watch personnel: When, in the opinion of the fire code official, it is essential for public safety in a place of assembly, because of the number of persons, or the nature of the exhibition, display, contest, or activity, the owner, agent, or lessee shall provide fire watch personnel, as required and approved by the fire chief, to remain on duty during the times such places are open to the public.”

Interpretation: When the fire code official, based on their judgement, decides that the activities being conducted within a place of assembly (such as the Industrial Arts, 4-H, or Fine Arts buildings) pose a high life or public safety risk, they can require fire watch personnel to be on duty during that event. The number of personnel and payment will be arranged by the fire chief.

We recognize that the code is not always ‘black and white’ and contain some ‘gray areas’, the Indiana Fire Code allows the fire code official to make case-by-case exceptions and decisions, with approval and coordination with the Indiana State Fire Marshalls Office. These exceptions are not guaranteed and requires sufficient time to plan and research. Last-minute expectations will not likely be granted. If there are events that violate these codes, the Indiana Fire Code requires the local Fire Department and/or the Indiana State Fire Marshalls Office to close the building down until the hazard / violation has been corrected. Basically, it’s better to get us involved early in the planning phase of any event. We are more than willing to work the vendors the best we can; however, we have the duty to the public to make sure the buildings and events that they attend are safe.

We are also going to require that your Indiana Amusement and Entertainment permit be forwarded to our department so we are aware of what events are being held within our jurisdiction.

We appreciate your cooperation with keeping our city and its citizens safe!

Regards,

Mark Baumgardner, Jr

Mark Baumgardner, Jr
Division Chief
Fire & Life Safety Inspector
City of Crown Point Fire Department