

Fireworks Displays in Tennessee

The State of Tennessee requires that flame effect displays, outdoor fireworks displays, and proximate pyrotechnic displays be performed by or supervised by operators licensed by the Tennessee State Fire Marshal's Office ("SFMO").

What is a flame effect display?

In Tennessee, a flame effect display is using flame effects before an audience as defined by National Fire Protection Association ("NFPA") 160 (Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-104-202(8)). A flame effect is defined as "the combustion of flammable solids, liquids, or gases to produce thermal, physical, visual, or audible phenomena before an audience" (NFPA 160 3.3.11, 2006 edition). Flame effects include, but are not limited to, the following: hand-held burning torches, cigarette lighters, candles, matches, and fire effects that have the illusion of danger to a performer; unattended torches, burning urns, and small fires; effects used by traveling shows and concerts and effects used for limited duration special events; a burning cabin or bonfire and large single or multiple brazier entrance; a simulated building or vehicle explosion that is part of a larger theme-type attraction; a live-action stunt show that is part of a larger the theme-type attraction; and a fire created as part of an illusion used to make an item or individual disappear (NFPA 160 A.3.3.19, 2006 edition).

What is an outdoor fireworks display?

In Tennessee, an outdoor fireworks display is defined as a "presentation of display fireworks for a public or private gathering as defined by NFPA 1123" (Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-104-202(15)). Outdoor display fireworks are defined as "those fireworks designed primarily to produce visible or audible effects by combustion, deflagration or detonation and that are classified as 1.3G fireworks or display fireworks in the regulations of the United States department of transportation (DOT) for transportation of explosives and other dangerous articles" (Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-104-202(4)).

What is a proximate pyrotechnic display?

In Tennessee, a proximate pyrotechnic display is defined as “the use of pyrotechnic devices and materials, 1.4G or 1.4S fireworks or pyrotechnics, when any portion of the audience is closer than permitted by NFPA 1123, and subject to NFPA 1126 requirements.”

Who can perform flame effect displays, outdoor fireworks displays, and proximate pyrotechnic displays?

Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-104-203(b), a municipality, county, or metropolitan government may conduct an indoor or outdoor proximate pyrotechnic display or an indoor or outdoor display using flame effects so long as the entity (1) obtains a permit from the SFMO; (2) has a certified operator on site at the event supervising or discharging the display; (3) shows proof of insurance or proof of adequate self-insurance; and (4) has the pyrotechnic materials supplied by or purchased from a licensed exhibitor.

Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-104-210(a)(2), it is unlawful for any person to perform (1) an outdoor display using display fireworks, (2) an indoor display or proximate pyrotechnics display using 1.4G or 1.4S fireworks or pyrotechnics, or (3) an indoor or outdoor display using flame effects *without an appropriately certified operator on the scene of the display to supervise during the preparation for the display, during the display, and immediately after the display until the site is released.*

To become certified as a flame effect display operator, outdoor fireworks display operator, proximate pyrotechnic display operator, an applicant must (1) submit a certification fee with the application form, (2) pass a certification exam, and (3) provide proof of having worked under competent supervision on at least three displays of the type of application in the three years immediately preceding the application.

For more information or questions regarding certification, please contact the Permits & Licensing Section at (615) 741-2981 or SFMO.permits-licensing@tn.gov.



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Authorization No. 335516 (06/18)