



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

375 Jackson Street, Suite 220
St Paul, Minnesota 55101-1806

Telephone: 651-266-8989
Facsimile: 651-266-9124
Web: www.stpaul.gov/dsi

OUTDOOR SPECIAL EVENTS

1. By State Law and City Ordinance, all temporary electrical wiring for special events must be done by a licensed electrical contractor (an electrical company, not just an electrician) under electrical permit with our office. This requirement also applies to portable generators.
2. All 125-volt, 15 & 20 Ampere receptacles (these are the standard electrical outlets) must have ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection. This can be a portable device used at the first outlet (see sample photo on second page), or in larger booths that have their own electrical panels this is also available as a circuit breaker. These portable ground-fault devices can be purchased at any building supply store and most hardware stores. The devices help limit the chance of electrical shock and electrocution by shutting off power if it detects a leakage of electrical current and are especially important at an outdoor event where electricity, bare ground and possibly rain are mixed. Five thousandths of one ampere can cause heart fibrillation and possibly death. To compare, a standard 60-watt light bulb takes ½ ampere, or **100 times the current needed to stop your heart.** This ground-fault protection is required for all these outlets, whatever they may supply, including lighting. (NEC Section 525.23) **This requirement has been in effect wherever the National Electrical Code is enforced (a majority of the U.S. and all of Minnesota) since 1996, so this is not a new requirement!**

Note: The exception that allowed refrigeration equipment such as freezers, refrigerators, ice cream machines and other appliances with a compressor to keep food cold has been deleted from the NEC as of July 1, 2005. This means that all equipment, regardless of its use must have GFCI protection. If a piece of equipment trips the GFCI, the equipment is probably defective. For instance, the maximum leakage allowed for a new refrigerator would allow 7 refrigerators leaking the maximum to still operate properly on one GFCI receptacle! You may bypass the GFCI receptacle overnight when there are no personnel working in the tent.

3. All temporary lighting (including lights inside tents, booths or trailers) must have a guard to prevent accidental breakage (NEC Section 525.21(B)). This can be an open-ended guard, but bare bulbs with no protection whatsoever are prohibited.
4. It is the event organizer's responsibility to ensure that the inspectors are notified well in advance of when an inspection will be required. Any inspections outside of normal working hours (7am-4pm Monday-Friday) will incur an additional charge to cover the inspector's overtime costs.
5. We have had special red tags made for defective electrical cords we may find. Do not remove these tags. The cord must be repaired or replaced as indicated on the tag. The electrical inspector's cell phone number is also on the tag if you have questions about what needs to be done.

Lack of a GFCI or other violations may force us to shut down a booth until any deficiencies are resolved. We will do our best to ensure the success of your event, but not at the risk of injury to you, your employees or your customers! Any further questions call (651) 266-9003.



SOME TYPES OF PORTABLE GROUND-FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTORS