



## TOWNSHIP OF CLINTON & LEBANON BOROUGH

**Bureau of Fire Safety**  
**Office of the Fire Marshal**

# **FIRE SAFETY MEMO: 2020-1**

### **COVID-19 COMPLIANCE FOR BUSINESSES**

This memo is being issued to provide guidance and prevent the potential fire code violations that may arise in regards to re-opening your business while practicing social distancing or shielding of certain environments. We received a memo from the State of New Jersey regarding safety on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and have added that information below. We are issuing this memo as an attempt to be proactive to reduce the chances of violations occurring and costs associated with the installation and removal of the potential violating factors. While all orders and recommendations provided by government agencies shall be followed please ensure that any solutions or changes do not violate the New Jersey Uniform Fire Code, which has been specifically designed for the protection of people, property, and the environment. Most fire codes have been implemented based on the loss of life of civilians, first responders, and significant property damage. If you have any questions comments of concerns, please feel free to contact me or anyone of my Fire Inspectors at any time.

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Best Regards,

Steven Milne

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**June 15, 2020**

Please understand that this memo cannot contain every possible scenario of a non-compliant inspection or provide the full details of the fire code. If there are any uncertainties please reach out to the Bureau of Fire Safety for assistance. This document contains a lot of detail in order to assist you in your decision-making processes.

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### **Curtains, Portions, Walls, or other Barriers:**

Temporary or permanent barriers, which is structural or non-structural erected to assist with social distancing and shielding shall comply with all codes in this document and the balance of the New Jersey Uniform Fire Code. As this is a complex issue please contact our office with any questions or concerns.

#### **Example of Code Violation:**

1. Storage or other obstructions within 18 inches of a sprinkler deflector or storage 24 inches from ceilings in non-sprinklered buildings.
2. Excess combustible material used to put up partitions/shields. Anything over 10% of the specific wall or ceiling area would be considered over the limit. Products that meet the flame propagation performance of NFPA 701 is the best direction to take when considering products.

#### **The reasoning of Violation:**

1. The reason for clearance from the ceiling is to ensure if there is a fire emergency; Fire Department's hose streams will be able to reach the fire without being obstructed. Combustible materials especially plastics and foams contribute to fast spreading fires.
2. Please refer in the reference and code: N.J.A.C 5:70-3, 807.3

### **Emergency Access:**

**Fire Apparatus Access Road:** A road, fire lane, public street, private street, parking lot lane and access roadway. Turning radius of a fire apparatus access road shall be a minimum of 25 feet, shall have an unobstructed width of not less than 20 feet, exclusive of shoulders, except for approved security gates, and an unobstructed vertical clearance of not less than 13 feet 6 inches.

**Fire Lanes:** At no time shall fire lanes or roadways which give access for fire department apparatus be blocked.

#### **Example of Code Violation:**

1. Any movable and non-movable items such as but not limited to: tables, chairs, cooking appliances, vehicles, barricades. (Barricades or other means are allowed provided they are movable with little effort and readily accessible)

**Reasoning of Violation:**

1. The Fire Department and other emergency agencies need quick access as to not hinder or delay their response and firefighter operations.

**Fire Hydrant and Fire Department Connection Access** – Access to fire hydrants and fire department connections must always be maintained.

**Building:**

**Emergency Lighting:** At no time shall any emergency lighting be obstructed.

**Fire Extinguishers:** At no time shall a fire extinguishers be blocked from view, obstructed, not properly mounted.

**Means of Egress:**

A means of egress consists of three separate and distinct parts: the exit access, the exit, and the exit discharge. All egress door and egress pathways shall have a continuous and unobstructed path of travel from any occupied portion of a building or structure to a public way.

**Example of Code Violation:**

1. Items in front of exit doors even when the building is not occupied. Tables in front of an exit blocking the door would not be acceptable.
2. Exit Discharge (pathway outside of a building) from building to street/parking lot being blocked or obstructed.
3. Unapproved locking devices on required exit doors to reduce costumers entering different locations. slide bolts, multiple locking devices, etc.

**The reasoning of Violation:**

1. Egress doors are required to be maintained for workers, customers, and first responders.
2. Exit Discharge needs to be clear to ensure in the event of an emergency.
3. During operating hours, required emergency egress doors shall be readily operational to ensure during an emergency they can be used for egress.

**Fenced in Areas:** Areas utilized for outside dining that are fenced in must have sufficient exits from the fenced area based on capacity. Width, capacity, the number of exits, and the travel distance of exits must be checked. Fenced areas cannot block existing building exits or exits of neighboring buildings. Exit access to a public way must always be maintained. Egress lighting must be sufficient.

## **Tents:**

**Tent Permits** – A Type 1 permit is required to be issued for all tents, tensioned membrane structures, and canopies greater than 900 square feet or more than 30 feet in any dimension whether it is one unit or composed of multiple units, but 16,800 square feet or less in area and 140 feet or less in any dimension, whether it is one unit or composed of multiple units. Tents exceeding this size require the issuance of a Uniform Construction Code permit.

**Smoking**- EO 150 prohibits smoking in any outdoor areas designated for the consumption of food and/or beverages. Approved “No Smoking” signs shall be posted through-out.

**Access to Buildings** – If access is provided to the inside of existing food or beverage establishments for bathroom facilities or ingress or egress to outside dining areas, it is imperative that all exits from the building remain unlocked and means of egress is available.

**Electrical** – The use of temporary wiring should be limited to what is absolutely necessary. Extension cords need to be rated for outdoor use and must be powered by a GFI protected outlet. Any permanent wiring installed requires a Uniform Construction Code permit.

**Outdoor Cooking** – A Type 1 permit is required to be issued for all outdoor cooking operations involving an open flame. If food is not being brought out from the restaurant’s kitchen and cooking is done outside, it must be done in the open or in a separate cooking tent. Appropriate fire protection equipment must be provided for cooking operations. The installation of cooking equipment must be inspected to ensure safe operation. LP

**Install Fire Extinguishers** – A minimum 2A10BC fire extinguisher shall be mounted with the handle no higher than 5 feet no lower than 4 inches to the ground.

**Flame Propagation Performance Treatment** – Before a permit is granted, the owner or agent shall file with the fire code official a certificate executed by an approved testing laboratory certifying that the tents and their appurtenances are composed of material meeting the flame propagation performance criteria of Test Method 1 or Test Method 2, as appropriate, of NFPA 701 or shall be treated with a flame retardant in an approved manner.

**Tent Requirements** – Requirements found in Chapter 31 of the International Fire Code 2015; New Jersey Edition must be met. Included, but not limited to are requirements for fire department access, tent location, means of egress, exit openings from tents, exit signs, means of egress illumination, emergency means of egress illumination, and portable fire extinguishers. Smoking and open flame are not permitted in tents. See guidelines.

### **Tent-Membrane Structure Requirements & Guidelines**

<http://www.clintontwpnj.com/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=3270>

Go to clintontwpnj.com, then click on Departments. Click on Bureau of Fire Safety, Scroll down to Applications and Forms. Then Click on the Link to Tent-Membrane Structure Requirements & Guidelines.