

Safety First As OSFM & IDOL Inspect Haunted Houses

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SPRINGFIELD – The Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal (OSFM) and Illinois Department of Labor (IDOL) are visiting and inspecting haunted houses to ensure they're safe before the doors creak open and screams are let out.

“Inspectors with IDOL’s Amusement Ride and Attraction Safety Division, along with other State and local partners, walk through, inspect and permit haunted houses before they’re open to the public,” said Illinois Department of Labor Carnival Manager Brian Fox.

Haunted houses in Illinois are required to be inspected prior to operation, though haunted houses operated by not-for-profit religious, educational, or charitable organizations can apply for an exemption from IDOL inspection. These haunted houses, however, must still be inspected by local authorities and/or the State Fire Marshal's office.

“Haunted houses are a fun and scary activity many enjoy during the Halloween season,” said Illinois State Fire Marshal James Rivera. “Making sure these attractions remain fire safe should be a top priority. We want to stress that all haunted house operators go through the proper steps and follow all safety guidelines to ensure guests are kept safe while visiting.”

The State Fire Marshal’s office notes these additional restrictions:

- Exits and pathways must be wide enough to account for the maximum number of people in the amusement,
- Limited number of dead-end paths,
- Provision of panic hardware on exit doors,
- Restrictions on open flame devices or pyrotechnic special effects, Furnishings and decorations are required to be flame resistant,
- All workers must be trained and prepared for actions to be taken during emergencies.

In addition to checking facility safety, including making sure exits are freely-accessible, state law requires a criminal background check and sex offender registry check for all amusement attraction workers, and a written substance abuse policy that includes random drug testing.

If you believe you visited a haunted house that didn’t have a permit, or need to report an accident or unsafe conditions, call the Department of Labor during business hours at 217-557-3112 or after hours at 217-993-2941. You can also submit a complaint online at the Department's [website](#).