



STATE OF MARYLAND

DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE

OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL



Larry Hogan
Governor

Boyd K. Rutherford
Lt. Governor

1201 Reisterstown Road/C Building
Pikesville, MD 21208
410-653-8980
Fax 410-653-8988
Toll Free 800-525-3124

Colonel William M. Pallozzi
Secretary

Brian S. Geraci
State Fire Marshal

INSPECTION GUIDELINES FOR WEDDING BARNs

Applicable Codes and Standards

- Life Safety Code, 2015 edition
- NFPA #1 Fire Code
- Maryland State Fire Prevention Code – COMAR 29.06.91

Wedding venues in existing agricultural style buildings have become very popular in several regions of the state. These guidelines address the occupancy classification and fire protection requirements for these structures.

Wedding barns are considered a change of use from an agricultural storage building to new assembly occupancies.

Wedding barns where there is consumption of food and/or beverage with an occupant load of 100 or more, or the fire area exceeds 5000 sq. ft. must be provided with automatic sprinkler protection. (NFPA #1, Section 13.3.2.1 as modified by COMAR 29.06.07.kk)

A fire alarm system is required when the actual or calculated occupant load is more than 300.

Emergency lighting is required to illuminate all the means of egress.

The occupant load should be calculated by square footage method or the actual arrangement of tables and chairs with adequate aisles.

At least two remote exits are required for a capacity of 600 or less individuals. Side swing exit doors are required by the Code, however large sliding barn style doors could be accepted provided they can be locked in the open position.

Combustible decorations such as hay bales, straw and dried natural vegetation are prohibited.

Candles that are securely supported on a substantial noncombustible base and the candle flame is protected are permitted.

The use of any fog, smoke or any other special effects will not be permitted within the structure.

The use of any and all pyrotechnics will not be permitted within the structure.

There will be no smoking of any kind permitted within the structure. A smoking area will be designated outside of the structure and be provided with the proper receptacles.

A minimum of two certified crowd managers will be present for each and every event within the structure. More may be needed depending on the size of the assembly area.

Management will provide a safety briefing to all employees working within the structure on the day of the event prior to its start.

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