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STEPHEN D. COAN
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

MEMORANDUM

TO: Heads of Fire Departments
FROM: Stephen D. Coan
State Fire Marshal
DATE: September 1, 2013
SUBJECT: **Corn Mazes**

Enclosed is a brochure developed by the Department of Fire Services as an informational document. Our agency receives multiple calls each year about what regulations apply to corn mazes. While there are no regulations that directly apply to corn mazes, there are broad statutes and regulations that would allow you to deal with situations that could lead to fire including M.G.L. Chapter 148, section 5 and 527 CMR 1.06.

This brochure is designed to bring about discussions between the local fire chief and corn maze operators to determine the safest approach to operating a corn maze, as each corn maze is unique and may meet some or all of these recommendations.

If you have any questions, please contact the Code Compliance & Enforcement Unit at (978) 567-3375 or in western Massachusetts at (413) 587-3181.

Corn Maze Safety

Corn mazes can be fun and enriching for children of all ages and their families. When owning or operating a corn maze it is your job to provide the fun experience that everyone is expecting. You need to make sure that you can provide a safe experience that will make everyone want to come back in future weeks, or years and to tell all of their friends to come too. There are many things that can get in the way of that experience though.

The primary danger at a corn maze is a medical or fire emergency that you and your staff are not prepared for. There are many preventative and precautionary measures which can be taken to ensure that if an emergency did happen, your staff would be well prepared to handle it in a professional manner. Below are some simple steps that can be taken to further prepare your establishment for either a medical or fire emergency.

Setup and Operations

- Provide the opportunity to the fire department to walk through and “preplan” in case of an actual emergency.
- Have a service road around the outside of the maze so emergency vehicles are capable of reaching any point in the maze as quickly as possible.
- Conduct work-related tasks involving gas or possible sparks when visitors are not in the maze.

- Create an elevated viewing platform above the level of the maze to look for potential risks.
- Have a public address system available to assist in making announcements to visitors (e.g. bull horn or loud speaker).
- Create a firebreak between the maze and surrounding land to prevent a surrounding fire from spreading into the maze.
- Make employees easily recognizable so visitors know whom to go to in case of an emergency.
- Have fire extinguishers readily available for emergency use.

Training Employees

- Advise employees on fire/life safety guidelines prior to assuming their duties.
- Consider CPR training for employees.
- Practice evacuation methods with employees so they are prepared in the case of an actual emergency.
- Never block entrances or exits when visitors are in the maze.

**In an emergency
Call 911**

Preparing Visitors

- Provide a map of the maze to use for quick exit if necessary.
- Give guests the ability to alert employees in case of emergency (e.g. easily recognizable flag to carry in the maze).
- Provide flashlights if operating during hours of darkness. No gas fired lanterns, candles, etc.
- Provide visitors with safety instructions prior to their entrance into the maze.

Rules to Post and Follow

- Do not allow open flame devices or equipment within the maze.
- Limit visitors to no more than 200 people per acre in the maze.
- Motorized vehicles should stay at a distance from the maze.
- Ban all smoking on the premises.



Levels of Safety

Most Protection

- Rules posted and verbal instructions given.
- Maps supplied to everyone.
- At least two supervisors present during operation.
- Public address system available for use.
- Elevated viewing platform used.
- Emergency flags given to visitors.
- Only open during the day.

Medium Protection

- Rules posted but no verbal instructions given to visitors and no maps provided.
- One supervisor working at all times.
- Public address system available for use.
- Elevated viewing platform available but not always used.
- Emergency flags not used.
- Open day and night.

Least Protection

- No rules posted, instructions given, or maps handed out.
- No supervision, public address system, or elevated viewing platform.
- No emergency flags used.
- Open day and night.

Emergency Responders

Know

- How to gain access to the specific site.
- Where is the nearest map of the maze.
- Entrances, exits, quickest way through maze.
- Who to contact in case of an emergency.
- Location of first aid kits.
- Location of fire extinguishers.
- Closest source of water for fire suppression.

Corn Maze Safety



**Recommendations for Operators,
Staff and Visitors from the
Massachusetts Department
of Fire Services**



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Division of Fire Safety
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DEPARTMENT OF FIRE SERVICES
Stephen D. Coan • State Fire Marshal