

Approved by AILG Facilities Committee 12/15/2021

The intent of the following documents is to reiterate the original AILG Roof Deck Occupancy Guidelines and memorialize the procedure that AILG Member organizations should use to get approval that they are complying with the AILG Roof Deck Occupancy Guidelines.

History

The current relationship among municipal officials, MIT, and the AILG with regard to roof deck use dates back to discussions in 2014 regarding so-called assembly use for social gatherings at the Boston FSILGs. Roof deck use was part of the larger discussion of assembly use in general at the FSILGs. Historical documents recording the assembly issues can be found [here](#).

In general, there are two ways that municipalities can regulate roof deck use.

Residential use generally means the use of the deck by the residents of the building. It generally means the number of people on the deck is low. Examples: A building resident brings her parents to the roof deck to show them the wonderful view. Or a couple of building residents go up to the deck on a nice spring day to work on a problem set.

Municipal approval for residential use typically means that the following requirements are satisfied:

1. The building has a valid Certificate of Occupancy (CO).
2. A given roof deck has received municipal deck certification. This certification involves the inspection of the deck structure and safety by an Architect or Structural Engineer who submits to ISD for approval.

This type of approval is relatively straightforward and easy to achieve and does not involve the municipality establishing a limit on the Deck Occupancy Number.

Assembly use generally means the use of the deck by non-residents and/or a large number of building residents,. Examples: Any social gathering of the building residents and outside guests. Or a Chapter Meeting of the FSILG members.

Municipal approval for assembly use typically means that the following requirements are satisfied:

1. The building has a valid Certificate of Occupancy (CO).
2. A given roof deck has received municipal deck certification. This certification involves the inspection of the deck structure and safety by an Architect or Structural Engineer who submits to ISD for approval.
3. A given roof deck has received a municipal assembly number, specific to that deck.

This type of approval is relatively difficult to obtain, both time-consuming and expensive, since it involves the municipality approving an assembly use occupancy number (aka Deck Occupancy Number).

So, in lieu of municipalities certifying so-called assembly use numbers for the FSILGs, the AILG and MIT DSL then established a FSILG Social Events Policy. (See [Current Version Here](#).)

As part of that policy, the AILG developed and voted upon a set of guidelines in order to provide a reasonable casual residential and “special event” deck use numbers to the applicable House corporation. (See [Guidelines Here](#).) Most Houses use the 4 criteria (see policy below) for their Deck Capacity number, and a very few have hired an architect or code expert. ([Link to Deck Capacity Spreadsheet Here](#).)

Policy

All Roof Deck Occupancy requests must be reviewed in the following manner. This means, in particular, that any Roof Deck Occupancy number derived for normal residential use or Special House event use above must undergo this process.

Allowable Deck Occupancy (Deck Capacity) is the total number of people who may be present on a deck.

A Special House Event is a one-time use as defined in the FSILG Office (See Current Version Here: [Social Event Policy](#)). That policy requires written approval of the Associate Dean/Director of the FSILG Office for each such Special House Event.

Allowable deck occupancy is the lesser of:

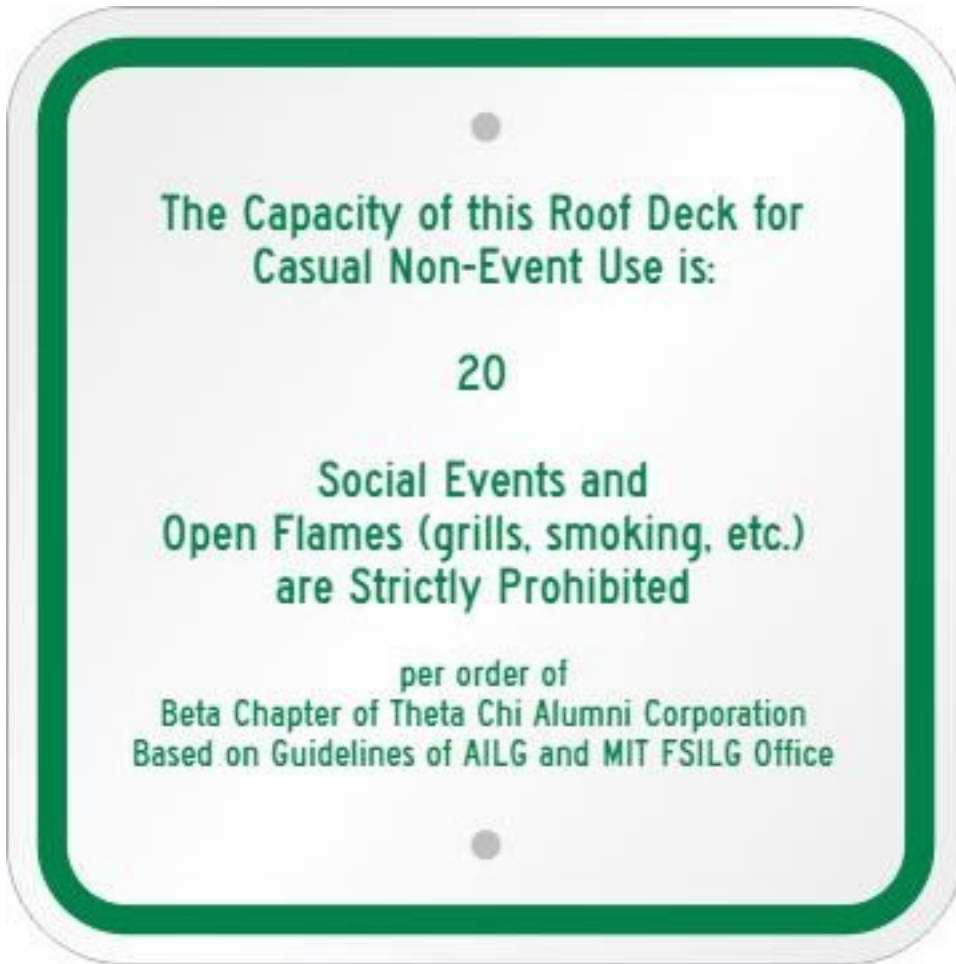
1. Area of deck (sf) divided by 25 (rounded down).
2. 10 occupants per exit multiplied by the number of legal exits, unless an architect or Massachusetts Building Code expert can demonstrate a higher egress capacity in conformance with current building code, as if new.
3. Number of residents on lodging license.
4. A lower limit established by the FSILG's house corporation.

The allowable deck occupancy may be exceeded for a Special House Event if an architect or Massachusetts Building Code expert can demonstrate current building code egress conformance, as if new. Occupancy may increase for one time Special House Event use consistent with the MIT FSILG Social Events Policy. That policy requires written approval of Associate Dean/Director of FSILG Office for each Special House Event and any social event use of a roof deck.

Signage consistent with the approved capacity shall be posted on the deck. (See Appendix A.)

Procedure

- A. The AILG Facilities Committee, and subsequently the AILG Board, will act promptly in their deliberations.
- B. The following shall be submitted to the AILG Facilities Committee:
 - a. Evidence of Municipal Roof Deck Certification (Current Boston Roof Deck Certificate, equivalent Cambridge or Brookline Certification).
 - b. A roof deck plan to scale, showing entrances, exits, railings, usable area, signage locations, and any other relevant information.
 - c. Photos of the deck, clearly showing exits, railings, and related structures.
 - d. The requested deck occupancy calculation showing:
 1. Square footage of the deck divided by 25, rounded down.
 2. Number of exits times 10.
 3. Number of residents from municipal Certificate of Occupancy.
 4. If, applicable, a lower limit established by the FSILG's House Corporation.
 5. If applicable, a demonstration by an architect or Massachusetts Building Code expert of a higher egress capacity in conformance with current building code, as if new.
- C. The AILG Facilities Committee will at its next regular meeting review the submission based on the policy above and generate a Roof Deck Capacity number and, if applicable, a Special Event Deck Capacity number.
- D. The AILG Facilities Committee will forward its finding to the AILG Board.
- E. The AILG Board will review the AILG Facilities Committee's finding and either approve it or return it to the AILG Facilities Committee for further deliberation.
- F. Upon a vote of approval by the AILG Board, the Deck Capacity number shall be forwarded to the House Corporation and MIT DSL.
- G. The House Corporation will implement the signage and enforce the usage recommendations upon its residents and guests at the property.

Appendix A: Signage Examples

NOTE: This signage example also includes non-Deck Occupancy prohibitions, which may vary from organization to organization.

REQUIRED WORDING:

The Capacity of this Roof Deck for Casual Non-Event Use is: #

Social Events are Strictly Prohibited

per the ABC House Corporation Based on Guidelines of AILG and MIT FSILG Office