



TEMPORARY TENTS

This document summarizes the Fire Code requirements for tents.

This document does **not** address membranes structures (air inflated, air supported, mast-and-cable supported, or tension frame supported structures other than tents)

Additional requirements may apply to:

- Tents with occupant loads exceeding 1,000
- Tents more than one story in height
- Tents exceeding 7,500 square feet

Contact the Fire Department as soon as possible to discuss requirements for the above-listed tent types.

Temporary means for a period of not more than 180 days within a 12-month period

Fire Department Permits and Inspections

A permit is required when the tent is over 400 square feet:

Exception: Individual tents that -

- are a maximum size of 700 square feet (the square footage of tents within less than 12 feet of each other shall be aggregated), and
- are open on all sides, and
- have a minimum clearance of 12 feet to all structures and other tents

A detailed site and floor plan shall be provided with the permit application and shall demonstrate compliance with the physical requirements for tents. These plans shall show all aspects of the event, not just the tent (such as parking lots used or drive aisles blocked). The plans shall include but be not limited to:

- Location on property, including fire lanes
- Dimensions of tent
- Walls, openings, and doors/sliding panels
- Means of egress details, from the inside of the tent to a public way
- Seating capacity and arrangement of the seating
- Location and type of heating and cooking equipment
- Any flammable or combustible liquids or flammable gases to be present in the tent

- Location and type of electrical and lighting equipment, including generators
- Signage
- Anchorage. In some cases, the tent and anchorage design must be stamped by a Professional Engineer. Please contact us as soon as possible to determine if engineering will be required.
- Fire extinguishers

In addition, the permit application shall have the required tent certificates and the tent owner affidavit attached.

Some requirements must be handled on a case-by-case basis, such as stand-by personnel and display of flammable or combustible liquids or gases. If you have any questions about the Fire Code requirements, or how they apply to your tent, please call the Fire Department. We recommend that you apply for tent permits at least two weeks in advance.

All tents that require a permit must have a Fire Department inspection after the tent is set up and before it is put into use. Inspection requests must be called in 48 hours in advance (weekend days not counted).

| Code Standards | |
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| Permittee, owner, or agent inspections (CFC 2403.7) | If the tent is present for more than 30 days, the permittee, owner, or agent must inspect the tent at regular intervals, but no less than two times, to ensure continued compliance with requirements. The Fire Department may require an inspection report which shall include maintenance, anchors and fabric inspections. |
| Fire department access (CFC 2403.8) | Fire Department access is required, must be maintained, and be located within 150 feet of the tent with approved walking access from that point to the tent. |
| Location of tent (CFC 2403.8.2 and 2403.8.6) | All distances below shall be measured from ropes or guy wires if present: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 feet from lot lines, buildings, and other tents. Separation between tents not used for cooking and when the aggregate area does not exceed 15,000 square feet is not required. • 20 feet from parked vehicles necessary to the operation of the establishment and cars parked on public streets • 20 feet from internal combustion engines. • 100 feet from all other parked vehicles • Special provisions apply for tents not separated from buildings • A 12-foot fire break passageway or fire road free of guy wires or other obstructions shall be maintained on all sides, unless otherwise approved by the Fire Department. |
| Anchorage (CFC 2403.9) | Anchorage is required and shall be per the approved plans. In some cases, the tent and anchorage design must be stamped by a Professional Engineer. Please contact us as soon as possible to determine if engineering will be required. |
| Seating (CFC 2403.11). | Seating shall be per the plans and Chapter 10 of the Fire Code Sections 1028.9, 1028.10 and 1028.12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional requirements apply if the ground is not flat. • Dead end aisles shall not exceed 20 feet |

| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exception: A maximum of 24 seats beyond 20 feet is allowed when the clear width between rows is <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 12 inches + ((number of seats – 7) x 0.6 inches ▪ At 24 seats that is 22 inches between maximum projection of the rear seat to the front, and the rear-most projection of the front seat. ● Seat rows with aisles on both sides (44 “ minimum, see Aisle width in areas without fixed seating section below to calculate the actual width required) shall not exceed 100 seats ● When the number of seats exceeds 200, chairs shall be bonded together in an approved manner in groups of not less than 3 seats OR shall be secured to the floor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exception: When flexibility of seating is required, up to 200 chairs do not need to be bonded together or secured to the floor ○ Exception: Seating at tables does not need to be secured to the floor or bonded together. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| <p>Aisle width in areas without fixed seating (CFC 2403.12.5)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Employee only areas the minimum width is 24 inches but shall not be less than that required by the employee occupant load ● In public areas, smooth-surfaced, unobstructed aisles having a minimum width of 44 inches shall be provided and shall progressively be increased in width, at all points, not less than 1 foot of aisle width for each 50 persons served by the aisle | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Number and size of exits (CFC 2403.12)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exits spaced at approximately equal intervals around the perimeter ● Travel distance of no more than 100 feet to an exit out of the tent. ● At least one exit and per table below <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Occupant Load</th> <th rowspan="2">Minimum Number of Means of Egress</th> <th>Minimum Width of Each Means of Egress</th> <th>Minimum Width of Each Means of Egress</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Tents</th> <th>Membrane Structures</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>10-199</td> <td>2</td> <td>72</td> <td>36</td> </tr> <tr> <td>200-499</td> <td>3</td> <td>72</td> <td>72</td> </tr> <tr> <td>500 – 999</td> <td>4</td> <td>96</td> <td>72</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1,000 -1,999</td> <td>5</td> <td>120</td> <td>96</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2,000 – 2,999</td> <td>6</td> <td>120</td> <td>96</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Over 3,000*</td> <td>7</td> <td>120</td> <td>96</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>*The total width of means of egress in inches shall not be less than the total occupant load multiplies by 0.2 inches per person</p> | Occupant Load | Minimum Number of Means of Egress | Minimum Width of Each Means of Egress | Minimum Width of Each Means of Egress | Tents | Membrane Structures | 10-199 | 2 | 72 | 36 | 200-499 | 3 | 72 | 72 | 500 – 999 | 4 | 96 | 72 | 1,000 -1,999 | 5 | 120 | 96 | 2,000 – 2,999 | 6 | 120 | 96 | Over 3,000* | 7 | 120 | 96 |
| Occupant Load | Minimum Number of Means of Egress | | | Minimum Width of Each Means of Egress | Minimum Width of Each Means of Egress | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Tents | Membrane Structures | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10-199 | 2 | 72 | 36 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 200-499 | 3 | 72 | 72 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 500 – 999 | 4 | 96 | 72 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1,000 -1,999 | 5 | 120 | 96 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2,000 – 2,999 | 6 | 120 | 96 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Over 3,000* | 7 | 120 | 96 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Exit openings (CFC 2403.12.3)</p> | <p>Exit openings shall remain open unless covered by a flame-resistant curtain that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is free sliding on a metal support. The support shall be a minimum of 80 inches above the floor level at the exit. ● Is of a color or colors that contrasts with the color of the tent | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Exit doors (CFC 2403.12.4)</p> | <p>Exit doors shall swing in the direction of egress, opening force shall not exceed 15 pounds.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Exit signs</p> | <p>Exit signs required when the occupant load is more than 50</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| (CFC 2403.12.6) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300 or less occupant load – two separate circuits, one dedicated • More than 300 – Two sources of power, one an approved emergency system with a duration of not less than 90 minutes |
| Egress Illumination (CFC 2403.12.7) | 1 foot-candle on a separate circuit or source of power. |
| Fabric (CFC 2403.4) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate from testing agency for each piece (with Certificate with serial number and piece number, and label that matches the serial number and piece number) • Affidavit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Name and addresses of the owners of the tent ○ Date the fabric was last treated with flame retardant solution ○ Trade name or kind of chemical used in treatment ○ Name of the person or firm treating the material ○ Name of the test agency and test standard by which the fabric was tested |
| Combustible materials (CFC 2403.5) | Materials such as hay straw shavings or similar materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shall be stored 50 feet away from any tent in which the public is admitted • are not allowed in a tent containing a public assembly unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Materials are need for feeding a care of animals, or ○ The materials are kept damp or shall be made flame-retardant |
| Combustible Vegetation (CFC 2404.21) | Combustible vegetation that could create a fire hazard shall be removed from the area occupied by the tent and within 30 feet of the tent. |
| Combustible Waste and Other Materials (CFC 2404.22) | The floor of the tent and the grounds outside within 30 feet of the tent shall be kept free of combustible waste and other combustible materials that could create fire hazard. Combustible wastes shall be stored in an approved container and removed at least one per day during the period the tent is occupied. |
| No Smoking (CFC 2403.6) | No Smoking signs are required. |
| Open flames (CFC 2404.7) | Open flames or other devices emitting flame, fire or heat or any flammable or combustible liquids, gas, charcoal or other cooking device shall NOT be permitted inside or located within 20 feet of a tent when it is open to the public |
| Fireworks | Fireworks shall not be used within 100 feet of tents (CFC 2404.8) |
| Spot or effect lighting (CFC 2404.9) | Lighting shall only be by electricity, and all combustible construction within 6 feet of such equipment shall be protected with approved noncombustible insulation not less than 9 ¼ inches thick. |
| Motion picture film (CFC 2404.10) | Motion picture film shall be safety film. |
| Fire extinguishers (CFC 2404.12) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One 2A:10B:C extinguisher in tents 1,000 square feet or less in size • One additional 2A:10B:C shall be provided for each additional 2,000 square feet or fraction thereof. • In addition, least one 2A:10:BC extinguisher shall be provided at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Each generator and transformer |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cooking location ● Pins and seals shall be intact and a current tag of inspection shall be affixed to the extinguisher |
| Fire Equipment (CFC 2404.13) | The fire department can require hose lines, water supplies and other auxiliary fire equipment Only required for very large tents or special conditions |
| Extension Cords (CFC 605) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Must be plugged directly into an approved receptacle and shall serve only one appliance. ● The current capacity amperes shall not be less than the rated capacity of the appliance or fixture. (Recommend minimum of 12 AWG extension cords.) ● Extension cords must be in good repair without splices, deterioration or damage. ● Extension cords must be grounded type when serving grounded appliances or fixtures. ● Cords must be located so they do not present a tripping hazard and are out of foot traffic areas. Secure cords as necessary with heavy tape or wire twist ties. |
| Separation of Generators (CFC 2404.19) | Generators and other internal combustion power sources must be at least 20 feet from tents and shall be isolated from the public by fencing or other means approved by the Fire Department |
| Stand-by Personnel (CFC 2404.20) | <p>When a tent is used as a place of assembly and has a capacity of 500 there shall be at least one qualified fire safety person, with one additional qualified fire safety person for each additional 1,000 persons, or fraction thereof. In addition, the Fire Department can require such personnel when, in the Fire Department feels it essential for public safety. Stand-by personnel shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be proficient in the handling of fire extinguishers and equipment ● Be familiar applicable fire and panic safety regulations ● Be approved by the Fire Department ● Keep diligent watch for fires ● Take prompt measures for extinguishing fires that occur ● Assist in evacuation <p>When required by the Fire Department, trained crowd managers at a ratio of one crowd manager per 250 occupants</p> |
| Flammable and combustible liquids (CFC 2404.17) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Flammable liquid fueled equipment shall not be used in tents ● Limited quantities of flammable or combustible materials required for display and merchandizing are allowed and must be approved by the Fire Department ● Tents must be located at least 50 feet from flammable and combustible liquids |
| LP Gas. (CFC 2404.16) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Containers shall be located outside the tent, with the relief valve pointed away from the tent ● Portable tanks holding 500 gallons or less shall be located at least 10 feet from the any ● Portable tanks holding more than 500 gallons shall be located at least 25 |

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| | <p>feet from any tent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portable containers shall be adequately safeguarded from tampering, vehicle damage, or other hazards and shall be in an approved location • Containers shall be fastened in place to prevent unauthorized movement and protect against earthquakes |
| <p>Heating and cooking equipment. (CFC 2404.15)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All equipment and vents shall be installed by the Mechanical Code • Installation of equipment, including tanks, piping, hoses, fittings, valves, tubing and other related components shall be approved by the Fire Department • Gas, Liquid, and solid fuel-burning equipment designed to be vented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Shall be vented to outside the tent ○ Vents and flues shall be not less than 12 inches from any portion of the tent • Cooking and heating equipment shall not be located within 10 feet of exits or combustible materials. Heaters shall be located at least 10 feet away from the tent. An approved duct may be used to convey heated air into the tent • Operations such as warming of foods, cooking demonstrations and similar operations that use solid flammables, butane or other similar devices shall be approved by the Fire Department. • Cooking tents with sidewalls or drops where cooking is performed shall be separated from all other tents by a minimum of 20 feet. • Outdoor cooking that produces sparks or grease laden vapors shall not be performed within 20 feet of a tent. • Electrical equipment shall comply with the electrical code. |
| <p>Display of motor vehicles (CFC 2404.18)</p> | <p>Liquid- or gas-fueled vehicles, boats or other motorcraft shall not be located in tents unless the following conditions are met.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Batteries are disconnected • Fuel in fuel tanks does not exceed one-quarter tank or 5 gallons, whichever is less. • Fuel tanks and fill openings are closed and sealed to prevent tampering. • Vehicles, boats, and other motorcraft equipment are not fueled or defueled in the building, tent or membrane structure or under the canopy. • The location of the vehicles shall not obstruct egress • Fuel system shall be inspected for leaks • Fuel supplies, if present, must be located in approved containers and in an approved location not less than 50 feet from the tent or membrane structure • Refueling, if performed, shall be located in an approved location at least 20 feet from the tent or membrane structure. Spills shall be cleaned up immediately. • When the tent or membrane structure is a place of assembly, compressed natural gas (CNG) or liquefied petroleum gas (LP-gas) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The quarter-turn shutoff valve or other shut-off valve on the outlet of the gas container shall be closed and the engine operated until it stops. ○ The hot lead of the battery shall be disconnected ○ Dual-fuel vehicles shall comply with the requirements for both fueling |

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