

**FIRE PREVENTION GUIDELINE: TENTS AND CANOPIES**

**EFFECTIVE DATE: 01/01/2011, REVISED JULY 2019**

**CODE REFERENCES:** California Code of Regulations -Title 19 (Div. 1, Ch. 2), Current California Fire Code (Section 906, Chapters 24, 31), Current California Building Code (Chapter 31E)

**NOTE:** *THIS GUIDELINE IS A SUMMARY OF FIRE DEPARTMENT CLARIFICATIONS OF CITY AND STATE CODES. INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN APPLIES TO TYPICAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND MAY NOT ADDRESS ALL SITUATIONS.*

**SCOPE:**

This guideline shall apply to individual tents and temporary membrane structures exceeding 400 square feet in size used as booths for carnivals, street fairs, special events, flea markets, etc.

Permits, approvals and inspections shall be in accordance with the codes referenced above.

**PERMIT PROCESS:**

A permit and approved plans must be obtained from the Fire Prevention Bureau prior to installation of the tent or canopy. Permit application and plans must be submitted to the Fire Prevention Bureau a minimum of five (5) working days prior to the tent *installation* date. Applications submitted less than 5 days prior to the install date will incur double fees. Submitted plans *must* include:

- ❖ Intended use of the tent/canopy.
- ❖ Date and hours of the event.
- ❖ Name and contact phone number for the event coordinator.
- ❖ A Certificate of Flame Resistance issued by the California State Fire Marshal's Office must be included for each tent, canopy and/or interior decorative fabrics or materials proposed.
- ❖ If applicable, provide information on any cooking operations included as part of the event. Indicate where the cooking will take place and the fuel source for the cooking equipment. (i.e., electricity, propane, charcoal/wood, etc.).
- ❖ If heat will be provided for the tent, indicate the types of heaters to be used and their fuel source (i.e., electricity, propane, etc.).

**PROVIDE A SITE MAP WITH THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:**

- ❖ Location of the tent/canopy in relation to other structures, roadways/parking areas. Separation distances to other structures must be noted.
- ❖ Provide the address for the location of the tent.
- ❖ Dimensions of the tent/canopy.
- ❖ Location and width of adjacent fire lanes.
- ❖ Location and width of all exits.
- ❖ Location of exit signs and emergency lights.
- ❖ Location of fire extinguishers.
- ❖ Location and type of heaters (if applicable).
- ❖ Location of generator(s) (if applicable).
- ❖ Location of cooking operations and fuel source (i.e., electrical, propane, wood, charcoal, etc.).
- ❖ If the tent is intended for dining, indicate the layout of the tables. A clear path of egress must be provided (and shown) to all exits.

**TENTS:**

- ❖ Sidewalls, drops, and tops of all such structures shall be made of a flame-resistant material or treated with a flame retardant approved by the California State Fire Marshal.
- ❖ The California State Fire Marshal's seal shall be permanently affixed to the structure or a label showing the name, type and applicant of flame-retardant materials.
- ❖ A fire department access of 20 feet wide shall be provided around the structure at all times.
- ❖ Fire lanes must remain unobstructed at all times.
- ❖ Structures shall be located a minimum of 20 feet from parking areas.
- ❖ Structures shall have at least one exit and exit number will be dependent on occupant load.
- ❖ All structures shall be adequately braced and anchored to prevent collapse or the adverse impacts from wind.

**PORTABLE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS:**

- ❖ Portable fire extinguishers shall be installed throughout so as to not to exceed 75 feet of travel distance.
- ❖ Portable fire extinguishers shall be a minimum rating of 2A:10BC.
- ❖ Structures with cooking facilities inside or adjacent to them shall have a fire extinguisher rating of a minimum 3A:40BC.

**IGNITION SOURCES:**

- ❖ Smoking, fireworks, open flame or heat sources capable of igniting combustible materials shall not be allowed inside the structures.
- ❖ 'No Smoking' signs shall be posted.

**COOKING OPERATIONS:**

- ❖ Generally only food warming with sterno is permitted inside assembly tents.
- ❖ Cooking tents must be separated by a minimum distance of 20 feet from other tents or membrane structures. Outdoor cooking that produces sparks or grease laden vapors shall not be performed within 20 feet of a tent or membrane structure.
- ❖ Cooking and BBQs shall be a minimum of 20 feet from any structure and shall be protected from access by the public.
- ❖ Warming appliances/steaming trays both electric and solid fuel types located inside tents will be monitored by the event organizers.
- ❖ Other unique appliances for the cooking and holding of food until served will be reviewed by Petaluma Fire Department and are only approved on a case-by-case basis.

**ELECTRICAL & GENERATORS:**

- ❖ Extension cords shall be of a grounded type and listed for exterior use.
- ❖ Extension cords shall be unplugged after each daily use.
- ❖ Extension cords shall not be used in lieu of hardwiring.
- ❖ Generators shall be a minimum of 20 feet from all structures and protected from public access.

**COMPRESSED GAS TANKS:**

- ❖ LPG and other compressed gas tanks shall be secured in an upright position.
- ❖ LPG and other compressed gas tanks shall be located a minimum of 10 feet from the structure.
- ❖ All tanks shall be provided with impact protection and protected from public access.
- ❖ Empty tanks shall be removed on a daily basis.

**INSPECTION:**

A fire inspection of the final tent installation is required for issuance of the permit. To schedule a fire inspection, please contact the Petaluma Fire Prevention Bureau at (707) 778-4389 a minimum of 48 hours (2 business days) in advance of the inspection date. Fire Prevention Bureau staff are available to conduct inspections Monday – Thursday. Inspections outside of those days may incur an additional inspection fee.