



Phone: (707) 938-3681 Fax: (707) 938-8775 E-mail: planning@sonomacity.org Web: www.sonomacity.org

Purpose: This handout summarizes the permit requirements for temporary outdoor tents, canopies, membrane structures, temporary stage canopies and similar temporary structures, uses and activities within the City of Sonoma during COVID-19.

According to the state's Blueprint for a Safer economy, business activities may be conducted under a tent, canopy, or other sun structure as long as no more than one side is closed, allowing sufficient outdoor air movement. Local permits and licensing may apply. A tent or canopy with one wall shall be separated from adjacent structures (walls or fences over 3.5 feet tall) by a yard, open to the sky, having a minimum width of two feet.

Use Period: Temporary tents, air-supported, air-inflated or tensioned membrane structures shall not be erected for a period of more than 180 days within a 12-month period on a single premise (CFC 3103.5).

Permits Required: Canopies and tents on private property do not require review by the Planning Department

- The Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority (SVFRA), requires a Tent Permit for tents, membrane structures, temporary stage canopies and similar temporary structures uses and activities **with one wall or more** and greater than 400 square feet in area, and for tents, membrane structures, temporary stage canopies and similar temporary structures uses **with no walls** greater than 700 square feet in area . For information on the SVFRA requirements visit: <http://svfra.org/home/svfra/pdf/2018-SVFRA-Tents-Guidlines.pdf>
- The Public Works Department, for encroachments on or temporary uses of public property.

Tents with one wall on residential properties greater than 400 square feet and canopies greater than 700 square feet require approval by the SVFRA.

It shall be the responsibility of the applicant to comply with all local, state and federal regulations pertaining to the installation and use of temporary outdoor tents, membrane structures, temporary stage canopies and similar temporary structures, uses and activities.

Definitions:

- **Membrane Structure.** An air-inflated, air-supported, cable or frame-covered structure as defined by the California Building Code and not otherwise defined as a tent.
- **Temporary Stage Canopy.** A temporary ground supported membrane-covered frame structure used to cover stage areas and support equipment in the production of outdoor entertainment events.
- **Tent.** A shelter, structure or enclosure made of fabric or similar pliable material.

Permitting Process:

1. The applicant must complete a Fire Department Construction and/or Operational Temporary Membrane Structure and Tent Permit application (digitally and available at <https://svfra.org/permit-app.html>)
2. On all permit applications, include a project narrative explaining the proposal in words. Include the dates of use, hours of operation, and number of employees.
3. The applicant shall provide three (3) copies of the site plan (if greater than 11"x17"). The site plan must show the following:
 - a. Address.

- b. Location of all buildings on the site.
 - c. Location of the seasonal outdoor activity.
 - d. Location, type and height of any temporary fencing.
 - e. Distance of the seasonal outdoor activity from all other buildings on the site.
 - f. Egress, ingress and internal circulation.
 - g. Parking (check with the Planning Department for any accessible compliant parking requirements).
 - h. Accessibility. While temporary tents, membrane structures, temporary stage canopies and similar temporary structures do not require a building permit, those temporary structures that are open to the public and affect commerce are considered to be a place of public accommodation and are subject to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Chapter 11B of the California Building Code. Spaces and elements within these temporary structures must be accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities and be connected by an accessible route from accessible parking and from the public way. It is the applicant's responsibility to comply with all applicable accessibility requirements. The building department is a resource for accessibility information and will investigate and enforce any accessibility complaints pertaining to temporary tents, membrane structures, temporary stage canopies and similar temporary structures. It is recommended that a Certified Access Specialist (CASP) be retained to provide accessibility guidance to applicants, property owners, event planners and installers of temporary (seasonal) outdoor tents, membrane structures, temporary stage canopies and similar temporary structures. For more information see "A Planning Guide for Making Temporary Events Accessible to People with Disabilities" at <https://adata.org/publication/temporary-events-guide>.
4. The applicant must have or obtain a City Business license for any business use of the proposed tent, membrane structure, temporary stage canopy or similar temporary structure, use or activity.
 5. Once all work covered under the Fire Department Construction and/or Operational Temporary Membrane Structure and Tent Permit application has been inspected by and approved the temporary structure or facility will be approved for use.