



Fire Prevention Bureau

Information Bulletin

Temporary Tents & Membrane Structures

Definitions:

Tent – A structure, enclosure, umbrella structure or shelter, with or without sidewalls or drops, constructed of fabric or pliable material supported in any manner except by air or the contents it protects.

Membrane Structure – An air-inflated, air-supported cable or frame covered structure as defined by the International Building Code not otherwise defined as a tent.

Outdoor Assembly Event – For the purpose of this definition, an outdoor assembly event shall include a circus, carnival, tent show, theater, skating rink, dance hall or other place of assembly in or under which persons gather for any purpose.

General Requirements:

Temporary tents and membrane structures in excess of 400 square feet shall not be erected, operated or maintained for any purpose without first obtaining approval and a permit from the Fire Marshal's Office.

Permit applications must be submitted online at least 10 business days prior to the event.

Temporary tents and membrane structures shall not be erected for a period of more than 180 days within a 12-month period on a single premises.

Exceptions:

1. Tents used exclusively for recreational camping purposes.
2. Tents open on all sides, which comply with all of the following:
 - a. Maximum area of 700 square feet for an individual tent
 - b. Maximum aggregate area of 700 square feet for multiple tents placed side by side without a firebreak clearance of 12 feet
 - c. Minimum firebreak clearance of 12 feet to structures and other tents



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Construction Documentation Required:

A detailed site and floor plan for temporary tents or membrane structures with an occupant load of 50 or more shall be provided with the permit application. The tent or membrane structure floor plan shall indicate details of the means of egress facilities, seating capacity, arrangement of the seating and location and type of heating and electrical equipment. The construction documents shall include an analysis of structural stability.

Structural Ability and Anchorage Required:

Temporary tents and membrane structures and their appurtenances shall be designed and installed to withstand the elements of weather and prevent collapsing. Documentation of structural stability shall be furnished to the fire code official.

Additional requirements may exist.

For more information, contact the Fire Prevention Bureau at 864.467.4450.