



Yakima County Fire Marshal's Office

Public Information Handout FP-5

Tents, Canopies and Air Inflated Structures



In order to ensure a safe and enjoyable event, the Yakima County Fire Marshal's Office requires the following conditions for the use of a temporary tent or membrane structure:

Compliance with all applicable provisions of the International Fire Code (IFC) is required. Depending on the size and type of the event, additional conditions not listed below may be required.

Access

Tents or membrane structures shall not be located in a fire lane. Access shall be maintained for all tents and membrane structures. Tents or membrane structures shall not be located within 20 feet of lot line,



buildings, other tents, membrane structures, parked vehicles, or combustion engines.

Exception: Separation distance between tents and membrane structures not used for cooking is not required when the aggregate floor area does not exceed 15,000 square feet.

Bracing

Tents or membrane structures and appurtenances shall be adequately roped, braced, and anchored to withstand the elements of weather and prevent collapse.

Flame Resistance

Tents or membrane structures and their appurtenances, sidewalls, drops, tarpaulins, and combustible decorative materials shall be composed of flame-resistant material or treated with a flame-retardant material in an approved manner. Tents or membrane structures shall have a permanently affixed label bearing the identification of size and fabric or material type.

Smoking

Smoking shall not be permitted in tents or membrane structures. Approved "NO SMOKING" signs shall be conspicuously posted.

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Exits

Exits shall not be obstructed in any manner. Guy wires and support ropes or cables shall not cross a means of egress at a height of less than 8 feet. Exits shall be clearly marked with approved exit signs when the exit serves an occupant load of 50 or greater. The surface of the means of egress shall be kept clear and maintained in an approved manner.

Open Flames

Open flames, candles, or other devices emitting flame, fire, heat, or any flammable or combustible liquids, gas, charcoal, or other cooking devices - or any other unapproved devices - shall not be permitted inside or within 20 feet of a tent or membrane structures while open to the public, unless approved by the Fire Marshal.

Cooking/Warming Devices

Tents or membrane structures where cooking is performed shall be separated from other tents or membrane structures by a minimum of 20 feet.

Exception: Cooking or heating food in tents without sidewalls or drops may be allowed at reduced separation distances when approved by the Fire Marshal. Cooking and heating equipment shall not be located within 10 feet of exits or combustible materials.

Fire Protection

A portable fire extinguisher with a minimum rating of 2A:10B:C shall be provided at intervals of not less than 75 feet of travel distance. Each tent or membrane structure where cooking of food producing grease takes place shall also be equipped with a portable Class "K" type extinguisher.

Combustible Materials

All combustible materials shall be kept away from exit travel pathways and heat sources.

Electrical Cords

Extension cords shall be plugged directly into an approved receptacle and shall serve only one portable appliance. All cords shall be protected from physical damage and foot traffic. All spliced wires and open junction boxes are not permitted. The rated electrical capacity of the appliance shall not exceed the rated capacity of the extension cord.

Generators

Generators shall not be located within tents or membrane structures. Refueling shall not occur within 20 feet of tents or membrane structures. Fuel storage shall not be located closer than 50 feet from tents or membrane structures.

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Flammable Gases

LP-gas containers shall be located outside. Safety release valves shall be pointed away from tents or membrane structures. Portable containers with a capacity of 500 gallons or less shall have a minimum separation between the container and the structure of not less than 10 feet.

Exception: Portable containers not exceeding 5 gallons are not required to be separated, provided they are secured to prevent displacement.

Permit

A fire code permit may be required for individual tents with sidewalls and membrane structures having an area in excess of 400 square feet or when a single tent or combination of tents exceed 700 square feet without walls. There are some exceptions to the permit thresholds, please refer to the IFC for further clarification.

Inspection

An inspection is required prior to the use of a tent or membrane structure before the event can begin. The tent or membrane structure and all aspects of the event must be in place prior to the inspection.



One tent with walls exceeding
400 square feet or tents without
wall exceeding 700 square feet.



10 x 10 Tents with walls that exceed 400 square feet
without 12 feet of separation between them.

If you have any questions or need further clarification, please contact Yakima County Building and Fire Safety at (509) 574-2300.