



DALLAS FIRE-RESCUE DEPARTMENT
Inspection & Life Safety Education
Fire Code Requirements for
Tents and Other Membrane Structures

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This checklist provides some of the basic regulations governing the operation of **Tents and Other Membrane Structures**. It is not possible to cover all regulations. If you have a particular question or concern, please telephone or FAX the Dallas Fire-Rescue Department. The initial inspection is conducted at no charge. There is no charge for the first reinspection. The second reinspection is subject to a \$100.00 fee, with all reinspections after the second, subject to a \$105.00 fee. When this checklist refers to tents, the regulations also govern canopies, air-supported, or other membrane structures.

1. Plans.

- A. If a tent is to be erected at a location, 3 sets of plans showing the details of the tent placement must be submitted to Inspection & Life Safety Education at least 15 days prior to the scheduled opening of the show. See "Tent Permit Plan Review Submittal Requirements" handout for more details on how to submit plans and how to obtain a tent permit.
 - (1) Floor plan for tents: seating capacity, arrangement and location of seating, and type of heating and electrical equipment, etc.
 - (2) Fire extinguisher equipment: location and nature.
 - (3) Dates: for move in, move out and times open to public.
 - (4) Contacts: persons' names and telephone numbers.
- B. Tents and all decorations including awnings, drapes, table skirts, curtains and other decorative material must be of flame-resistant material. Certification of flame-resistance must be provided when submitting the plans.

2. Permits

- A. Tents and canopies (in excess of 399 square feet) must have a permit from Inspection & Life Safety Education (214/ 670-4319). Permit must be obtained when submitting plans.
- B. Liquid Petroleum Gas for demonstration purposes or for cooking purposes must be approved and permitted by the Fire Marshal.
- C. Open flames and burning or smoke emitting materials must be approved and permitted by the Fire Marshal prior to the event.
- D. Special effects materials, pyrotechnics and fireworks must be approved and permitted by the Fire Marshal.
- E. Welding and cutting equipment and use must be approved and permitted by the Fire Marshal. Other permits may apply. Contact Dallas Fire-Rescue for more information.

3. Location of Tents

- A. Tents shall not be located within 20 feet of property lines, buildings, parked vehicles or internal combustion engines.
- B. Tents having an area of 15,000 square feet or more shall be located not less than 50 feet from any other tent.
- C. Tents where cooking is performed shall be separated from other tents by a minimum of 20 feet.
- D. Tents must be adequately braced and anchored to prevent collapse. Documentation of structural stability shall be furnished upon request.

4. Exits

- A. Exits shall be spaced at equal intervals around the perimeter of the tent and shall be located such that all points are 100 feet or less from an exit.
- B. Exit openings from tents must remain open unless covered by a flame-resistant curtain.
- C. Exit ways must be kept clear of obstructions at all times, with adequate aisle widths provided.
- D. Exits must be clearly marked. Exit signs shall be of an approved type (self-luminous or internally or externally illuminated by an approved source).

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- E. Curtains, drapes, or decorations shall not visually or physically obstruct exit doors, exit signs, fire alarms, hose cabinets, standpipes, fire extinguishers, or any other life safety equipment at any time.

5. Fire Access

- A. Fire lanes shall not be obstructed or barricaded at any time in any manner.
- B. Fire hydrants and fire department connections must be maintained with a 3-foot clearance and no parking within 15 ft. of fire hydrant.
- C. An unobstructed fire break passageway or fire road not less than 12 feet wide and free from obstructions must be maintained on all sides of all tents.

6. Sources of Ignition

- A. "NO SMOKING" signs shall be posted throughout structure.
- B. Open flame, flammable or combustibles liquids or cooking devices are not permitted inside or allowed within 20 feet of the tent unless approved by the Fire Marshal. A minimum separation of 4 feet between the flame in the cooking equipment and the tent material is required.
- C. Hay and straw used for decoration must be flame retardant. Hay and straw used for feeding must be stored and maintained in a manner approved by the Fire Marshal. Maintain areas within 20 feet of the structure clear of all combustible materials.
- D. Sawdust and shavings must be maintained flameproof at all times, by wetting down each day.
- E. Cooking and heating equipment shall not be located within 10 feet of exits or combustible materials.
- F. Candles are prohibited inside tents.
- G. Combustible trash shall be removed at least once a day.

7. Fire Extinguishers

- A. Typically, a 2A-10BC rated fire extinguisher shall be provided for every 3,000 square feet of floor space and within 75 feet of travel. The extinguisher must be serviced and tagged annually.
- B. A Class K rated fire extinguisher shall be provided within 30 feet of food processing equipment that produces grease-laden vapors. (Existing 40-BC rated fire extinguishers installed prior to 07/01/04 that are serviceable and maintained are permitted.) The extinguishers must be serviced and tagged annually.

8. Equipment

- A. Secure compressed gas cylinders to prevent cylinders from falling or being knocked over.
- B. Heating devices shall be installed in accordance with the Building and Mechanical Code. Electrical wiring of a temporary nature shall be installed in accordance with the Electrical Code.
- C. Commercial cooking appliances shall be installed in accordance with the Mechanical and Plumbing Codes, and be equipped with ventilation hoods and approved automatic extinguishing systems. All other cooking equipment shall have separation from combustible materials, or non-combustible shielding, as approved by the Fire Marshal.
- D. Generators and other internal combustion power sources shall be separated from tents by a minimum of 20 feet and shall be fenced or enclosed by approved means to isolate from the public.
- E. Refueling must be approved by the Fire Marshal and shall be performed in an approved location not less than 20 feet from tents.

9. Miscellaneous

- A. Fire watch personnel may be required at the discretion of the Fire Marshal.
- B. Occupant load must be posted in a conspicuous place near the main exit.