

# Temporary Assemblies & Tents

## General Requirements

Temporary indoor or outdoor assemblies and temporary use of tents in excess of 400 square feet, or in excess of 700 square feet when open on all sides, are allowed with a pre-event fire inspection and fire permit.

Temporary assemblies and tents shall comply with the Minnesota State Fire Code (MSFC) 2020 edition Section 3105 and 105.6. 47. For the purpose of this handout, the term “tents” includes tents that are enclosed or open on all sides, temporary membrane structures, and air-supported or air-inflated structures.

## Submittal Requirements

All permittees must provide:

- completed Fire Permit application signed by the property owner
- a detailed description of all activities that will be occurring, the hours of the event, and the approximate number of participants
- two copies of a detailed site or floor plan showing the seating arrangement, exits, and locations of portable fire extinguishers (one approved copy must remain on site at all times)
- flame-spread rating information for materials used as ceiling and/or wall decorations, and certification by an approved testing laboratory that the flame resistances of materials used to construct the tent are in compliance with NFPA Standard 701

## Definitions

- Air-Supported Structure:** A structure wherein the shape of the structure is attained by air pressure and occupants of the structure are within the elevated pressure area..
- Membrane Structure:** An air-inflated, air-supported, cable- or frame-covered structure as defined by the International Building Code (see Chapter 31) and not otherwise defined as a tent or canopy.
- Canopy:** A structure, enclosure, or shelter constructed of fabric or pliable materials supported by any manner (except by air or the contents it protects) and open without sidewalls or drops of the perimeter.
- 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 that it protects.

## General Requirements For Assemblies

- Documentation must be provided showing all draperies, decorative fixtures, and other fabrics and materials have been treated with an approved fire retardant material.
- When more than 200 loose seats, folding chairs, or similar seating is provided, chairs must be bonded together in groups of not less than three. This is not necessary for seating around tables.

## General Requirements For Tents

- Tents must have a permanently attached label stating the material is fire retardant.
- Tents shall be at least 20 feet from lot lines, structures, parked vehicles, or internal combustion engines as noted in MSFC 3103.8.2.

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**Other Requirements**

- Cooking and Heating Equipment (No Tent):** Cooking and heating shall be at least 10 feet from exits and combustible materials.
- Cooking (Outdoor):** Outdoor cooking that produces sparks or grease-laden vapors shall be at least 20 feet away from a tent or membrane structure. LP gas must be secured outside of a tent. LP containers 500 gallons or less must be 10 feet from the structure, LP containers with more than 500 gallons must be 25 feet from the structure.
- Cooking (Tents):** Tents where cooking is performed shall be separated from other tents or membrane structures by a minimum of 20 feet.
- Fire Extinguishers:** Provide a portable fire extinguisher with a minimum rating of 4A-20BC in every cooking facility. When cooking operations use oil or animal fat, a K class portable fire extinguisher is required. Fire extinguishers must be mounted in an approved and accessible location and bear a tag certifying it has been inspected within the last year by a licensed contractor. Additional fire extinguishers shall be provided at 75-foot spacing.
- Fireworks:** Legal Fireworks are not permitted to discharge within 100 feet of tents.
- Flammable Liquids:** Flammable liquids shall not be stored within 50 feet from the tent.
- Food or Beverage Handling:** Food or beverage handling and/or operation must be reviewed by Hennepin County Environmental Health for necessary permits.
- Generators:** Generators shall be at least 20 feet from tents. Proper electrical grounding is installed in accordance with electrical code. MN State electrical permit is required.
- Signage:** No Smoking signs must be posted every 50 feet.
- Vegetation and Waste Materials:** Vegetation and waste materials must be at least 30 feet from tent. Provide flame-spread rating information and documentations for materials used as wall and/or ceiling decorations. Combustible materials such as hay, straw, wood shavings, sawdust, and similar material shall not be located in a tent containing assembly occupancy. (Exception: Materials necessary for the daily feeding and care of animals and materials that are kept damp. Combustible trash must be removed from tents once each day.)
- Venting:** Venting shall be to the exterior with approved spark arrestors. Vents shall not be placed within 12 inches of the tent.

**Egress Requirements (2015 International Fire Code Table 3103.12.2 and 12.3)**

- Exit Openings From Tents:**  
Exit openings from tents shall remain open unless covered by a flame-resistant curtain. The curtain must be:
- free sliding on a metal support that is a minimum of 80 inches above the floor level at the exit
  - arranged so that when open, no part of it obstructs the exit
  - of a color or colors that contrast with the color of the tent

Minimum Number of Means of Egress and Means of Egress Widths From Temporary Membrane Structures and Tents			
Occupant Load	Minimum Number of Means of Egress	Minimum Width of Means of Egress	
		Tent	Membrane Structure
10-199	2	72	36
200-499	3	72	72
500-999	4	96	72
1,000-1,999	5	120	96
2,000-2,999	6	120	96
Over 3,000*	7	120	96

For SI: 1 inch=25.4 mm.  
\* When the occupant load exceeds 3,000, the total width of means of egress (in inches) shall not be less than the total occupant load multiplied by 0.2 inches per person.



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