

General Requirements for The Use of Tents and Temporary Membrane Structures



**ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH & SAFETY**
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

General Information

The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidelines for the use and erection of tents and portable membrane structures at Texas A&M University. Texas A&M University uses the 2018 International Fire Code (IFC) and the 2018 National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Life Safety Code[®] as the guideline for this document and inspections.

Tents and membrane structures having an area in excess of 400 SF shall not be erected, operated or maintained for any purpose without first obtaining a permit and approval from the University Authority Having Jurisdiction (Environmental Health & Safety - EHS). IFC 3103.2

Exception: Tents open on all sides having a maximum size of 700 SF and a minimum clearance of 12 feet to all structures and other tents are exempted from permitting. Also, the aggregate area of multiple tents placed side by side without a fire break clearance of 12 feet, not exceeding 700 SF. IFC 3103.2

Applicability

This procedure applies to any tent or temporary membrane structure meeting the requirements in the General Purpose section above erected, operated, or maintained on the campuses of Texas A&M University (including the Texas A&M Health Science Center) and the Texas A&M University System RELLIS Campus.

Definitions

- 1. Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ)** – The organization, office or individual responsible for enforcing the requirements of a code, standard, or approving equipment, materials, an installation or procedure, specifically EHS (NFPA 102 3.2.2)
- 2. Labeled** - Equipment or materials to which has been attached a label, symbol, or other identifying mark of an organization that is acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction and concerned with product evaluation, that maintains, periodic inspection of production labeled equipment or materials, and by whose labeling the manufacturer indicates a compliance with appropriate standards or performance in a specified manner (NFPA 102 3.2.4)
- 3. Noncombustible Material** – A material that, in the form in which it is used and under the conditions anticipated will not ignite, burn, support combustion, or release flammable vapors when subjected to fire or heat (NFPA 102 3.3.15)
- 4. Tent** – A structure, enclosure or shelter, with or without sidewalls or drops, constructed of fabric or pliable material supported by any manner except by air or the contents that it protects (IFC 202)

Requirements

A tent or membrane structure designed to meet all of the requirements in this document and approved by the AHJ shall be permitted to be used as a temporary structure.

- Membrane structures shall be limited to one story in height, however, height shall not be limited in number of feet unless otherwise ruled by the AHJ
- Tents or membrane structures and their appurtenances shall be adequately roped, braced, and anchored to withstand the elements of weather and prevent against collapsing; Documentation of structural stability shall be furnished to the AHJ upon request (IFC 3103.9)
 - Texas A&M encourages the use of permanent anchors at locations where tents are regularly erected (with Facilities Services approval) and the use of concrete weights in lieu of water barrels
- The applicant/ tent users will be responsible for restitution of any damage resulting from the erection/use of tents
- The placement of tents relative to other structures shall be at the discretion of the AHJ with consideration given to occupancy, use, opening, exposure, and other similar factors (NFPA 101 11.11.3.5)
- Tents, membrane structures or canopies, cords, cables, etc., may not obstruct sidewalks, drive lanes, fire lanes or pedestrian walkways

- ❑ All tents greater than 400 square feet shall have at least one 5 pound (minimum 2A10BC), multipurpose (ABC) fire extinguisher for each 3,000 SF or portion thereof (AHJ, NFPA 101 11.11.5)
- ❑ Open flame or other devices emitting flame, fire or heat or any flammable or combustible liquids, gas, charcoal or other cooking device or any other unapproved devices shall not be permitted inside or located within 20 feet of the tent or membrane structures while open to the public unless approved by the AHJ (IFC 3107.4)
- ❑ Open flames such as from candles, lanterns, kerosene heaters and gas-fired heaters shall not be located on or near decorative material or similar combustible materials (IFC 308.1.5)
- ❑ Portable LP gas containers with a capacity of 500 gallons or less shall have a minimum separation between the container and structure not less than ten feet; Tanks must be secured to a stationary object or securely fastened to prevent tampering, damage by vehicles, or others hazards (IFC 3104.16.2.1, 3107.13.3)
- ❑ Propane gas or electric heating devices intended to be used inside tents or membrane structures must be labeled equipment and shall be noted on the permit application and approved by the AHJ (NFPA 101 11.11.6.1.1)
- ❑ Heating and cooking equipment shall not be located within ten feet of exits or combustible materials; Tents with sidewalls or drops where cooking is performed shall be separated from other tents or membrane structures by not less than 20 feet (IFC 3107.12.3, 3107.12.5)
- ❑ All cooking equipment must be attended at all times; Hot coals must be doused and/or properly disposed of in specially designated coal dumpsters to prevent fires
- ❑ Operations such as warming of foods, cooking demonstrations, and similar operations that use solid flammables, butane or other similar devices that do not pose an ignition hazard are approved (IFC 3107.12.4)
- ❑ Fires built on the ground and open fire pit devices are prohibited
- ❑ The finished ground level enclosed by any tent, and the finished ground level for a reasonable distance, but for not less than 10 feet outside of such a tent, shall be cleared of all flammable or combustible material or vegetation that is not used for necessary support equipment; The clearing work shall be completed to the approval of the AHJ and prior to the erection of such a tent; The premises shall be kept free from such flammable or combustible materials during the period for which the premises are used by the public (NFPA 101 11.11.4.1)
- ❑ Combustible waste shall be stored in approved containers and be removed from the premises at least once a day during the period the structure is occupied by the public (IFC 3107.19)
- ❑ Smoking shall not be permitted in any tent or membrane structure (NFPA 101 11.11.4.2)
- ❑ If smoking areas are to be provided adjacent to the tent, "No Smoking" signs must be provided and conspicuously located on the tent or membrane structure; Smoking must be a minimum of 10 feet from the tent (NFPA 101 11.11.4.2.2)
- ❑ Generators and other internal combustion power sources shall be separated from tents or membrane structures by not less than 20 feet and shall be isolated from contact with the public by fencing, enclosure or other approved means (IFC 3107.16)
- ❑ Electrical systems and any equipment shall be isolated from the public by proper elevation or guarding, and all electrical fuses and switches shall be enclosed in the approved enclosures; Cables on the ground in areas traversed by the public shall be placed in trenches or protected by approved covers (NFPA Standard 102-10.1)
 - All wiring shall comply with NFPA 70, National Electric Code.
- ❑ Exits shall be spaced at approximately equal intervals around the perimeter of the tent or membrane structure, and shall be located such that all points are 100 feet or less from an exit (IFC 3103.12.1)
- ❑ Exit doors shall swing in the direction of exit travel (IFC 3103.12.4)
- ❑ Exits shall be clearly marked; Exit signs shall be installed at required exit doorways and where otherwise necessary to indicate clearly the direction of egress when the exit serves an occupant load of 50 or more (IFC 3103.12.6)
- ❑ The number of exits and exit width and location for all enclosed tents shall be approved by the AHJ