GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF TENTS

The following guidelines are based on the requirements of the California Fire Code, California Code of Regulations Title 19 and the State Fire Marshal’s office. The State Fire Marshal’s Office (SFM) and Environmental Health and Instructional Safety (EHIS) are charged with ensuring compliance with these regulations.

Inspection

- EHIS may inspect any tent to determine compliance.
- Any violations must be corrected prior to the use of the tent, or immediately if discovered during the event.

Flame Resistance and Structure

- All tent fabric must be flame resistant.
- A certificate or other proof of approval by a testing laboratory is acceptable as evidence of the required fire resistance. A copy of the certificate must be provided to EHIS or SFM upon request. These certificates should be available from the tent supplier.
- Tent suppliers must be able to certify that tents have been erected in accordance with manufacturer recommendations, industry standards, and code requirements.

Floor Coverings

- The area enclosed by any tent and not less than 10 feet outside of such tent, must be cleared of all flammable or combustible material or vegetation. Prior to erecting the tent. The premises must be kept free from such flammable or combustible materials during the period for which the area is used.
- No hay, straw, shavings, or similar combustible materials are permitted within any tent unless they have been treated to make them flame retardant. A certificate or other proof of approval by a testing laboratory indicating that the material has been properly treated is acceptable as evidence. A copy of certificates must be provided to EHIS or the SFM prior to placing the material within a tent. These certificates are available from the material manufacturer or supplier.

Exits and Occupant Load for Enclosed Tents

- Tents that have sides attached and rolled up are capable of being enclosed and must meet these requirements even if it is intended for the tent to remain unenclosed during the event.
• The number of separate exits required for enclosed tents is based on the floor area of the tent. The maximum number of occupants, called the occupant load, is also based on the floor area of the tent. Exits must be equally spaced around the perimeter of the tent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupant Load (floor area of tent)</th>
<th>Number of Exits (minimum)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>49 (343 sq ft) or less</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between 50 (350 sq ft) and 600 (4,193 sq ft)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between 601 (4,200 sq ft) and 999 (6,993 sq ft)*</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 or more (7,000 sq ft)</td>
<td>4 (more exits may be needed)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

• The occupant load is decreased when tables and chairs are used (banquet style) – the number of required exits remains the same because exits are based on floor area. The following calculation will determine the occupant load with tables and chairs:

\[
\text{net square footage of tent floor area} / 15 = \text{occupant load with tables and chairs}
\]

Example: The number of occupants allowed, with tables and chairs, in a 50’X50’ tent with a 10’X20’ stage.

\[
2,500 \text{ square feet (floor area)} - 200 \text{ square feet (stage area)} / 15 = 153 \text{ persons}
\]

PLEASE NOTE: These calculations are for planning purposes only and do not represent a legal capacity. The State Fire Marshal’s Office will provide legal capacities based on submitted set-up plans.

• Each exit must be provided with an exit sign. The word "EXIT" must be plainly legible in letters at least 6 inches high and with strokes not less than ¾ inch wide. If the tent is to be occupied after sunset, emergency lighting must be provided. In most cases, the tent company can provide exit signs and emergency lighting.

Exit Requirements for All Tents

• The minimum width of an exit must not be less than 32 inches.

• Guy wires or guy ropes must not cross an exit at a height of less than 8 feet.

• Where tents are placed near fences or other obstructions, a clear exit path must be maintained to an area sufficiently away from the tent.

• Tent stakes must be railed off, capped, or covered.

Fire Protection

• Owners or operators of tents having a capacity of 500 persons must provide at least one qualified fire safety person in every tent. Provide additional qualified persons for each additional 1000 people or fractions thereof. Qualified persons must be proficient in handling fire extinguishers and be familiar with evacuation procedures.

• One portable fire extinguisher (dry chemical ABC type) must be furnished at each exit of an enclosed tent. The University sponsor for the event tent is responsible for ensuring that fire extinguishers are provided. If necessary, arrangements for portable fire extinguishers
may be made by contacting the Facilities Service Center at (714) 278-3494. There may be a charge for fire extinguisher service.

- Smoking is prohibited in any tent. No smoking signs must be posted.
- Pyrotechnics, open flames (including use of sterno and other food warming devices), and cooking equipment must be approved in advance by the SFM or EHIS. Commercial cooking equipment such as grills and broilers, when used within a tent, must meet the same requirements for indoor commercial kitchens (i.e., proper ventilation, fire suppression systems).
- Commercial cooking operations must be protected by an approved kitchen fire suppression system.
- Vehicles necessary to the operation of the tent facility must be parked at least 20 feet from any tent. No other vehicle may be parked within 100 feet unless parked on a public street.
- Liquids having a flash point below 200°F cannot be stored in any tent or closer than 50 feet.
- All heating equipment must be approved by the State Fire Marshal.

**Electrical**

- The electrical system and equipment must be isolated from the public by proper elevation or guarding. All electrical fuses and switches must be enclosed in approved enclosures. Cables on the ground in areas travel by the public must be placed in trenches or protected by approved covers.
- All electrical systems must be properly grounded.
- Generators must be placed so that exhaust fumes do not enter tents.

**Insurance Requirements**

Outside groups may be required to provide evidence of insurance and endorsements. Contact the Office of University Risk Management for further information.

**Applicable Standards of the State Fire Prevention Code**

NFPA 1, *Fire Prevention Code*
NFPA 102, *Standard for Grandstands, Folding and Telescopic Seating, Tents, and Membrane Structures*
NFPA 70, *National Electrical Code*

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